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Essays on Catholic life

Thomas O'Hagan



O'Hagan

ZLH

Essays on Catholic Life

BY

THOMAS O'HAGAN

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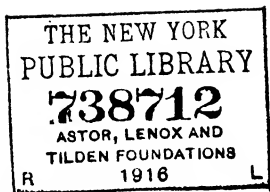
JOHN MURPHY COMPANY

PUBLISHERS

200 W. LOMBARD ST.

BALTIMORE, MD.

1916



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RIGHT REVEREND THOMAS J. SHAHAN
S. T. D., J. U. L.
Bishop of Germanicopolis
and
Rector of The Catholic University
Washington, D. C.

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p. 16

WORKS BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Studies in Poetry

Canadian Essays

Essays: Literary, Clerical and Historical

Chats by the Fireside

In the Heart of the Meadow

Songs of Heroic Days

P R E F A C E

Of the ten essays in this volume, seven have already appeared in various Catholic periodicals. The opening paper, on "The Influence of Religious Home Training," was read at the International Eucharistic Congress held in Montreal, Canada, September, 1910. The papers on "The Relation of the Catholic Journal to Catholic Literature," and "The Relation of the Catholic School to Catholic Literature," were read, respectively, at the Catholic Press Convention at Columbus, Ohio, August, 1911, and the American Catholic Educational Convention held at Pittsburgh, Pa., July, 1912. Of the remaining seven papers, "The Office and Function of Poetry," "The Irish Dramatic Movement" and "Catholic Intellectual Activities," first appeared in the *Magnificat*. "Catholic Journalists and Journalism" and "A Week in Rome"

were written for the *Rosary Magazine*; "What Is Criticism?" for *The Columbiad*, and the "Catholic Element in English Poetry," for the *American Catholic Quarterly Review*, and the courtesy of the publishers of these periodicals for permission to reprint in book form the seven essays is hereby gratefully acknowledged. It might be well to add that the paper on "A Week in Rome" was written in 1902, while Pope Leo the Thirteenth, of blessed memory, was yet gloriously reigning.

The ten essays bear the book title of "Essays on Catholic Life," inasmuch as the point of view in every essay is Catholic and the subjects discussed in nearly every instance are of particular and vital concern to Catholics.

THOMAS O'HAGAN.

May 1st, 1916.

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THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGIOUS HOME TRAINING

[A Paper Read at the International Eucharistic Congress,
Montreal, September, 1910.]

The Church, the Home and the School—these are the trinity that mould our lives, fashion our character and fit us for the knighthood of heaven and the knighthood of earth. Each of this trinity has its great work to do. The Church pours upon the new-born the regenerating waters of baptism and makes it a child of God and heir to the Kingdom of Heaven; the home represented in the father and mother keeps watch over the seedlings of grace implanted at baptism in the garden of the infant heart and nourishes those seedlings, while the school trains will and heart and mind to follow the precepts of truth and hearken to the voice and admonitions of God.

Now, the nearest representative of God in regard to the child is the Church, but

the Church during the first five years of the child cannot exert her care directly over it, so that the life of grace implanted through baptism must remain without nourishment unless the parents—unless father and mother watching over the seedlings of grace implanted by holy baptism in the heart of the child, foster by piety, precept and prayer the tender buds of faith and love that later will bear beautiful blossoms in the full summertime of the garden of life.

Father Becker, the well-known Jesuit writer, in his admirable work, "Christian Education," likens the soul of a child after baptism to the bud of a sunflower, and he asks what is necessary that this bud be developed to the full splendor of blossom? Nothing, Father Becker answers, except that parents, especially the mother, direct this bud again and again to the light and warmth of religion. If she does not understand this, then the

tender bud, the soul, the heart of the child will waste away and die.

It is, as you all no doubt know, the opinion of some of the greatest adepts in pedagogics that as the child is in its sixth or seventh year, so it will remain. Indeed, we have proof of this before us in the lives of the saints. From very tenderest childhood these holy men and women were directed by pious mothers, who instilled in their hearts a love of prayer, a devotion to Jesus and Mary, a practice of the sweet duties of religion. Susanna and Tobias are examples in the Old Testament, and in the Christian Era we have a St. Louis, of France, a St. Aloysius and a St. Stanislaus. Yes, assuredly, as the child is in its sixth and seventh years, through the care of parents, so it will remain.

Is it not true that we hear today complaints on every side of the alarming increase of crime committed in early childhood and youth, crimes of every descrip-

tion down to dastardly suicide. We boast of our civilization, of our progress, of our intellectual advancement, but whence comes this frightful increase in the number of juvenile criminals? Has the influence of religious home training ceased? Are our mothers ceasing to be mothers? Are the altars of our homes adorned with naught but Dead Sea fruit?

Philanthropists who study and note this alarming increase of crime among the youth of our land attribute it to a lack of education during early childhood. They hold that greater pains should be taken with the education of children while they are small; that more attention should be given to the kindergarten training, holding—and in this they are right—that a more lasting impression can be made on the character of every man before he has reached the sixth year of his life than in all subsequent years together.

The kindergarten is, indeed, very, very good, provided, as Father Becker says, it

be pervaded with the light and warmth of the one true religion which the Divine Lover of children has instituted. But, after all, is not the parental home the best kindergarten, and is not a pious mother in this garden the best gardener? Who will watch more carefully the budding flower of virtue in the heart of the child than the mother? Who will tend so assiduously this flower, breathing into its petals the warmth of piety and faith and nursing it with the sunshine of prayer as the mother? Oh, my friends, let us not be mistaken. It is from the mother that radiates all or well-nigh all the influence of religious home training. From the father the child, indeed, acquires wisdom and that strength of mind and discipline of the will which come from ready and cheerful obedience, but it is on the mother's lap—in the mother's arms, that the child receives that moral impress which fashions its life for time and accompanies it even into eternity.

No matter what your priests may do, says the eloquent Bishop Cowgill, of Leeds, England, no matter how zealous the sisters and the teachers may be, parents have a duty to their little ones which no one else can discharge. They must always remain the first teachers and instructors of their offspring. This is the law of nature, the law of religion, the order of Divine Providence, the will of God. It is, continues the Bishop of Leeds, on the mother's lap that the little child should learn to lisp its first prayer, to praise God, its Maker, to bless God, its Saviour, to love Jesus of the Manger, Jesus of Calvary, Jesus of the Tabernacle.

It is from the father's lips it must learn its first lesson of wisdom. These lessons will never be forgotten. This primary duty of parents is such that, unless it be observed, priests and nuns and teachers will labor in vain. Unless parents co-operate with them it is not possible to give children a proper training. What is built

up in school or in Church, if not supported or strengthened by home teaching, sooner or later, must fall to ruin. Hence the duty of parents is to provide their children with a Christian home.

And now let me ask what is a Christian home? It is a fortress built by the hand of God founded and instituted at His command, sanctified by His Divine love. It is, as the good Bishop of Leeds says, a home in which religion holds the first place, in which the name of our Lord is a familiar sound and where the parents govern themselves and rule their children by the principles of a Christian life. The Christian home is easily discovered. The very walls of the house will tell you at a glance who it is that holds the first place in the minds and hearts of its inmates. If on looking around the eye rests on emblems of our holy faith, if you find in every room the crucifix or the image of Our Lady, or a religious picture; if you see the holy water stoup well replenished,

along with other tokens of faith, then the very appearance of the house will afford presumptive evidence that Our Divine Lord holds His rightful place in the bosom of the family dwelling there.

What is a Christian home? Is it not one modeled on the Holy Home at Nazareth, where dwelt Jesus and Mary and Joseph; where holiness reigned throughout and where flourished every domestic and social virtue. In this Holy Home at Nazareth, Christ, our Divine Lord and Saviour, chose to live for thirty years. He spent his childhood, His boyhood and His youth subject to His Blessed Mother and His foster-father Joseph. In His wisdom Our Divine Lord willed to appear among us as a little child. He began life as we begin it, and passed through every stage of it. This Holy Home at Nazareth is our model—the model for you, parents, as a Christian home. If, indeed, your homes be modeled on the Home at Nazareth, little fear will there be that your

children will lack religious home training, for your lives will, like that of Mary and Joseph, be a daily lesson in piety and prayer, and your children, subject to you, will grow through fond obedience, as did Our Divine Lord, in every virtue and grace.

You remember that our late Holy Father Pope Leo XIII, of blessed memory, in his Encyclical on the Pious Association of the Holy Family, sets forth clearly how the Holy Family of Nazareth is a model for every Christian family of today. "In St. Joseph," says the late Holy Pontiff, "the father of a family has a wondrous example of parental solicitude and care; in the Most Holy Virgin Mother of God, mothers find a perfect model of love, of modesty, of resignation and of perfect faith; and in Jesus, who 'was subject to them,' children have a divine pattern of obedience for their admiration, their devotion and their imitation. Those who are highly born will learn

from this family of royal blood how to be modest in prosperity and dignified in adversity. The rich will be taught how virtue must be preferred to riches. Those who are engaged in labor, and all who, especially in our times, are so strongly tempted to dissatisfaction and impatience by straitened circumstances and the hardships which they and theirs have to suffer, need only cast their eyes upon these holy members of a holy household, and they will find reasons rather for rejoicing than for murmuring at the lot which has fallen to them. Like the Holy Family, they labor; like the Holy Family, they have to provide for their daily bread; like Joseph, they must live by what they earn; and if they work with their own hands, so also did Jesus before them.

But let me be clearly understood here. The very center of the radiating influence of religious home training is the mother. She is the spiritual sun of the household, giving light and warmth to its every nook

and corner, filling with an atmosphere of love and joy and the eternal sunshine of heaven.

But you will ask who and what is a Christian mother? Let me answer you in the words of Rev. Bertrand L. Conway, the Paulist father: "A Christian mother is one who makes of maternity a priesthood and pours the faith of Christ into the very veins of her child as she nurses it at her breast. One who teaches its little hands to join in prayer and its little lips to lisp the sweet name of Jesus and Mary. She is the mother who knows how to caress and how to punish, how to be self-sacrificing and how to resist her child's whims. She is the woman who later on will be glad to sacrifice the claims of vanity and the desire for pleasure to give her whole time and attention to her growing children; who will prefer the voluntary slavery of home duties to the capricious liberty of the world. Such a mother will be well able to instill into

her daughter modesty and devotedness, and to teach her son the manly virtues and the noble passion of duty."

Such, my friends, is the portrait of the good Christian mother limned for us by Father Conway in his interesting work, "The Christian Family." Both Father Conway and Father Becker, it will be observed, emphasize for us the work of the Christian mother. Why? Because, after all, it is to our mothers we owe our chief gifts—indeed, our whole happiness, intellectual and moral. It is they who create the moral atmosphere of the home, fix its decalogue, tend the flame upon its spiritual altar and lead us by the hand along the path which duty has marked for our footsteps. There is not one in this hall today that does not realize in his life the influence of a good mother. There is not one in this hall today whose memory does not reach back in childhood to a good mother perhaps now dwelling with the Saints of God. To me, next to the sacra-

ments of God's Church and the teaching of her divinely appointed pastors, I owe more to the memory of a good and pious mother in keeping my stumbling footsteps along the path of light and duty, than to any other influence.

Through the mists of years I see now this good and pious mother gathering her little family around her in her humble abode in sweet converse with God in evening prayer. Hers was the simple faith of childhood:

"Not learned save in gracious household ways,
Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
In angel instincts breathing Paradise.
Interpreter between the gods and men,
Who look'd all native to her place and yet
On tiptoe seem'd to touch upon a sphere
Too gross to tread and all male minds perforce
Sway'd to her from their orbits as they mov'd
And girdled her with music. Happy he
With such a mother! faith in woman kind
Beats with his blood and trust in all things high,
Comes easy to him, and tho he trip and fall,
He shall not blind his soul with clay."

I am sure, then, that it is evident to every one of us that in the home the mother is the very altar dispensing from tapers of purity, faith, devotion and truth, the light which illumines each Christian household. Nay, her sweet soul is the lily on the altar symbolizing the Lily Maid of Israel clad with blue mantle—the Mother of Our Divine Lord.

If, then, we would have religious home influences safeguarding the lives of our children, we must first of all have good mothers. You know full well that what children see makes a far deeper impression on them than what they hear. What will it avail parents, I ask, if they enjoin upon their children to attend mass on Sundays and say their morning and evening prayers, if they fail in these duties themselves? There can be no Christian home unless parents practice what they preach, for it is the careful observance of religious duties and the constant remembrance of God's presence that give the

home its Christian character. We are careful to guard them against the germs of disease. Are we careful to guard them against the germs of sin? Are diseases of the soul less dangerous, less fatal than diseases of the body? We send our children to school that they become learned in the wisdom of this world, but we oft forget to instruct them in the wisdom of God. They are rich in all languages but the language of the soul. They shine with all light save the light of God.

I feel certain that many of the losses to the Church may be traced to the lack of religious home training. We are not bereft of our faith in a moment. It is usually a process of many years. The parents who fail to discharge their duties to their children as practical Catholics, who do not safeguard their tender and innocent souls, who do not instruct them in our holy faith, who yield to human respect and bow down before the fashions and

frivolities of life, are making possible and probable these losses to our holy faith.

Are we not, too, living in an age most dangerous to the practice of Catholic faith, and if so, should we not in a special manner safeguard the little ones in our homes, instruct them in the truths of Holy Church, and, if possible, preserve unsullied their baptismal robes. But, let me repeat again, this is largely the divine work of the mother. The spiritual care of the child in the home is assuredly her task, and blessed is that task if she fulfil it well. In a monthly publication there recently appeared those beautiful words: "The child that learns the Our Father on the lap of its mother; that learns from the lips of its mother the stories of the patriarchs and the lovable narrations about the little Christ-Child, possesses a living source of religious faith in its soul which cannot be wholly effaced, neither by the scorching sun nor by the storms of life. The profound and sweet impressions in-

stilled by a mother remain still fresh and green when every other recollection withers and dries up; yet the death agony itself cannot destroy them."

Our convents are doing a great work to fashion Christian women to tend the altar of home, but our convents cannot do everything. The tyrannical exactions of society and the false ideals of home, which so largely obtain today, well-nigh nullify the counsels and precepts of the good religious in our convents, and, as a consequence, the influence of religious home training is often a negligible quantity in many of the Catholic homes of our land. The fires of faith are allowed to burn down and young children whose hearts should be nourished with the glow and ardor of piety and devotion, grow up indifferent, careless, and even wicked. Furthermore, my good friends, is not the habit or custom of family prayer going out? How many Catholic families are there who never gather at eventide to re-

cite the Rosary or thank God for His gifts and favors of the day. In the midst of our strenuous life, as we retire in the evening after the smoke of battle, do we not forget that in the words of Tennyson, more things are wrought by prayer than this world dreamed of:

For what are men better than sheep or goats,
That nourish a blind life within the brain,
If, knowing God, they lift not hands or prayer
Both for themselves and those who call them friend?
For so the whole round earth is every way
Bound by gold chains about the feet of God."

I fear, too, that oft our ideals are of clay and brass. Walled in by the material things of life, we forget the sublime life of the soul. We are no longer children of faith. We have lost the sweet vision of childhood. Trust in God has gone out from us. The world has touched our beauteous baptismal robe and virtue has gone out from it. Oh, could we but return and kneel again at the altar of our childhood! Exchange our false ideals for the simple faith of childhood:

Hearts oft bow before strange idols
 Strength of life and breath of fame,
 And, forgetful of life's morning,
 Dream of noontide's gilded name;
 But the idol that I cherish
 Knows no glory e'en in part,
 'Tis the simple faith of childhood
 Long grown strong within my heart.

In the darkest hour of sorrow,
 When each star has veiled its face,
 Turn I fondly to my idol,
 Full of heavenly light and grace;
 Then my step grows firm and steady,
 Down the mystic path of night;
 For the simple faith of childhood
 Guides me, leads me ever right.

This is the faith, my friends, that overcometh the world. It is the faith that has brought this magnificent Congress to our city. It is the faith which makes of each Christian home a treasury of grace. It is the faith which links heaven and earth in the sacrament of the altar where Christ, Our Divine Lord, is tabernacled as our Guest, inviting, entreating the fathers and mothers and children to share in His Divine Banquet of Love.

THE OFFICE AND FUNCTION OF POETRY

Today it would seem that poetry has fallen from its high place; that its office and function have ceased to be understood by the people. No longer does "this flowering of the soul, this golden ear of the century, this summit of thought," hold votaries at its altar. Men and women of our day worship at other shrines where burn dimmer but more alluring tapers. Not only has the breath of joy left our meadows and the subsoil of prose been turned up and sown with the seed of science and harrowed into sharp ridges of every-day facts, but the great temple of song, with its glorious symbolic windows and its crowning turrets, its altars of truth and light, its carved niches of grace, its figures and forms of heaven speaking to the heart of each devotee, stands silent by the wayside with scarce a pilgrim at

its door or a worshiper bowed before its altar lamps. The poet has, indeed, fallen upon barren times.

Yet this is all but a phase of civilization, or rather a psychological index of the attitude of the world of today towards the idealism of the soul. We are living in an eminently material and practical age. The dreams of the artist have given way before the imperious sweep of science and invention; genius in our day is more concerned with the conquest of the air and the subjugation of land and sea and all material forces to the will and purpose of man, than in bodying forth in lofty rhyme or glorifying on canvas or in Carrara marble "the light that never was on sea or land"—that vision which comes to the soul in moments of inspiration as the gift and dower of God.

Still the old gray earth is not wholly without dreamers. From time to time great souls arise to bear aloft the torch and light up the avenues of life and labor,

to make sure the footsteps of mankind and lead the world to higher planes and nobler vistas. Their advent marks the true progress of civilization.

I say, true progress of civilization, for any period or age emptied of spiritual ideals, cannot make for the higher things of the race. It should not be forgotten, too, that the artist is but a lesser priest of the altar, whose heart and lips have been touched by sacred fire from Heaven and to whom have been revealed in a special manner the mysteries of nature.

Yes, the true poet is of God, ordained for the sacred ministry of mankind, wearing the vestments of a priest and seer and dwelling ever within the great temple dedicated to the higher purposes of God. He shall not look down toward Camelot, on pain of spiritual death. Worldly Sir Lancelots, with glittering helmets and golden spurs, may ride by, but the divine genius of song, symbolized by a Lady of Shalott, must not heed the tempter clad

in earthly allurements; otherwise the greatest of gifts may prove but a curse to mankind. The mission of the poet is the ennoblement of the soul through its dower of faculties; the mission of God's priest at the altar is salvation through the gift of divine grace.

Now as all art eludes definition, seeing that in the last analysis a definition is a thing of logic, poetry, in many respects the greatest of all the arts, evades, too, any defining term. Matthew Arnold, if I remember correctly, defines poetry as the happiest thoughts of the happiest moments. Yet it is much more than this. Wordsworth defined it as "the breath and finer spirit of all knowledge and the impassioned expression which is in the countenance of all science." But it is, too, much more than this. It is life keyed to the finest and most subtle whisperings of the soul, full of vision, full of imagination, full of fire, yes, fire from the altar of true inspiration, borne by thurifers of

God who stand eternally at the altar of Beauty and Truth and serve God in the great temple of life.

Of late years we have been paying too much tribute to the mere artistry of poetry—to the excellence of technique, to the color and jingle of words—to a kind of society poetic debut noticed and advertised in the social columns of our newspapers. In all this there is absolutely no pulse. In all this there is no pillar of fire to lead us on. In all this we are neither touched nor exalted, nor inspired. There is no step upward, no trumpet call from beyond the blue. We pace the earth and breathe fine air and joy in the friendship that is ours and are contented.

But true and genuine poetry creates for us an ideal world and takes us into its keeping. It does not satisfy, it is true, but in its divine dissatisfaction we taste something of the joys which, ripened, will be our dower in eternity. Then God will complete the splendid vision of the soul,

and His Divine love, which now permeates all things, will then blossom and flame as a golden rose in the eternal kingdom. For immortality reaches through all great art, and the song of the reaper at sunset amid the golden sheaves has in it a note of as permanent value, and smites the ear of Heaven with a like joy and harmony as does that of the lark as he pours out in mid air his molten, liquid notes.

Yes, truly, poetry is one of the greatest of the arts—in its capacity, as Hamilton Mabie says, to receive, express and convey thought, emotion and experience. It is not solely dependent upon the intellectual in man, but resides more largely in the emotions. The drama has its root and being in action, the epic in recital, and the lyric in feeling. A poem to have any artistic value must be a unit, whether it deals with a deep emotion, a world-event or the objective presentation of life in action.

Now there is an approach to every poem of supreme value to the interpreter.

For art is not haphazard in its development, but follows both a norm and a plan. It does not develop by tangents, but grows from the center outwards. In this it follows nature, whose flower and fruitage grows through the seasons as art feels its way and ripens through the centuries.

The primary purpose of art is to minister to the soul and crown life with the deepest felicities of the spirit. The poet, the painter, the sculptor, the musician, is neither of yesterday nor today, for he holds the centuries as a scroll in his hands. Where Phidias struck his chisel and Raphael dreamed and Wagner told the music legend of Parsifal in sacred notes, there is neither time nor age, nor winter, nor summer. All is youth and the perpetuity of youth.

But we must go to the poets if we would, indeed, understand what poetry means. They have touched it; they have felt it; they have dreamed it. They know well what is the making of a poet—his

relation to eternal truth, his fealty as a knight-errant of the race, his worship of beauty in every form, his rapt ecstasy of love, his unbroken pursuit of the divine gleam. They know by intuition and dower of God's gifts what our blind eyes cannot uncover through the most assiduous labor. Listen, then, to Tennyson as he tells us of the birth, mission and influence of "The Poet":

The poet in a golden clime was born,
 With golden stars above;
 Dower'd with the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn,
 The love of love.

He saw thro' life and death, thro' good and ill,
 He saw thro' his own soul.
 The marvel of the everlasting will,
 An open scroll,

Before him lay: with echoing feet he threaded
 The secretest walks of fame:
 The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed
 And wing'd with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,
 And of so fierce a flight,
 From Calpe unto Caucasus they sung,
 Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore
 Them earthward till they lit;
 Then, like the arrow-seeds of the field flower,
 The fruitful wit

Cleaving, took root, and springing forth anew
 Where'er they fell, behold,
 Like to the mother plant in semblance, grew
 A flower all gold,

And gravely furnish'd all abroad to fling
 The winged shafts of truth,
 To throng with stately blooms the breathing spring
 Of Hope and Youth.

So many minds did gird their orbs with beams,
 Tho' one did fling the fire.
 Heaven flow'd upon the soul in many dreams
 Of high desire.

Thus truth was multiplied on truth, the world
 Like one great garden show'd,
 And thro' the wreaths of floating dark upcurl'd,
 Rare sunrise flow'd.

And Freedom rear'd in that august sunrise
 Her beautiful bold brow,
 When rites and forms before his burning eyes
 Melted like snow.

There was no blood upon her maiden robes
 Sunn'd by those Orient skies;
 But round about the circles of the globes
 Of her keen eyes

And in her raiment's hem was traced in flame
 WISDOM, a name to shake
 All evil dreams of power,—a sacred name.
 And when she spake,

Her words did gather thunder as they ran,
 And as the lightning to the thunder
 Which follows it, riving the spirit of man,
 Making earth wonder,

So was their meaning to her words. No sword
 Of wrath her right arm whirl'd,
 But one poor poet's scroll, and with *his* word
 She took the world.

And Browning, too, the greatest psychological poet of the centuries, draws for us his "true poet," whom he knows if others do not. These two great poets, Browning and Tennyson, looked upon the office of poetry as sacred—something akin to worship. Because of this the author of the "Ring and the Book" and the author of "In Memoriam" waxed strong in the gifts of Heaven, even when old age would warrant that the fires of inspiration had died upon the hearth. When Browning gave to the world his last poem, "Asolan-do," he was fast approaching fourscore

years, while Tennyson was in his eighty-third year when he published his drama, "The Foresters." Both poems show no lack of mental grip or poetic vision. Such continued youth in genius is not always found among the poets. But both Browning and Tennyson were poets of wholesome moral life and living. Browning was a strong, vital, cheery, breezy man, while Tennyson possessed a noble poise, revealing in his life and living the strong virtues of an English home.

We are always safe, then, in turning to the great poets if we wish to learn what is the significance and worth of poetry, what is its office and function. How little, too, did the great masters of poetry care for the mere adulation or condemnation of the multitude! As artists they realized that they were and would be misunderstood. Spiritual seers and teachers of mankind are always misunderstood. For the world is too busy with little things to hearken to the voice from above. Often

"God's glow-worm" is not seen of men. The fisher on the coast of ancient Tyre who fished up the purple-yielding murex remained, too, unheeded; but soon the value of the murex stirred the traders of the market, and then, as Browning says, the small dealers "put blue into their line" and outbade each other for popularity, and as a result fared sumptuously, while he who fished the murex up remained unrecognized. How well all this is set forth in Browning's "Popularity"!

Stand still, true poet that you are!

I know you; let me try and draw you.
Some night you'll fail us: when afar

You rise, remember one man saw you,
Knew you and named a star!

My star, God's glow-worm! Why extend
That loving hand of His which leads you,
Yet locks you safe from end to end
Of this dark world, unless He needs you,
Just saves your light to spend?

His clenched hand shall uncloze at last,
I know, and let out all the beauty:
My poet holds the future fast,
Accepts the coming ages' duty,
Their present for the past.

That day the earth's feast-master's brow
Shall clear to God the chalice raising;
"Others give best at first, but thou
Forever set'st our table praising,
Keep'st the good wine till now!"

Meantime, I'll draw you as you stand,
With few or none to watch and wonder:
I'll say—a fisher on the sand
By Tyre the old, with ocean-plunder,
A netful, brought to land.

Who has not heard how Tyrian shells
Enclosed the blue, that dye of dyes
Whercof one drop worked miracles,
And colored like Astarte's eyes
Raw silk the merchant sells?

And each bystander of them all
Could criticise and quote tradition
How depths of blue sublimed some pall—
To get which pricked a king's ambition;
Worth sceptre, crown and ball.

Yet there's the dye, in that rough mesh,
The sea has only just o'er-whispered!
Live whelks, each lip's beard dripping fresh,
As if they still the water's lisp heard
Through foam the rock-weeds thresh.

Enough to furnish Solomon
Such hangings for his cedar-house,
That when gold-robed he took the throne
In that abyss of blue, the Spouse
Might swear his presence shone

Most like the centre-spike of gold
Which burns deep in the blue-bell's womb
What time, with ardors manifold,
The bee goes singing to her groom,
Drunken and overbold.

Mere conchs! not fit for warp or woof!
Till cunning come to pound and squeeze
And clarify,—refine to proof
The liquor filtered by degrees,
While the world stands aloof.

And there's the extract, flaked and fine,
And priced and salable at last
And Hobbs, Nobbs, Stokes and Nokes combine
To paint the future from the past,
Put blue into their line.

Hobbs hints blue—straight he turtle eats:
Nobbs prints blue,—claret crowns his cup:
Nokes outdares Stokes in azure feats,—
Both gorge. Who fished the murex up?
What porridge had John Keats?

Again, it should not be forgotten that much of our best poetry is expressed under the form of a symbol. This is largely the method of art, and is found embodied in it under every form of expression. Better far, too, in art is it to suggest than express. Art that must be translated by the

spirit rather than interpreted by the intellect, is of much more value as art.

Just run, for instance, your mental finger along the great pages of poetry, and you will find how largely it finds expression under the form of the symbol or the allegory. What would Dante's *Divine Comedy* be if it were not both symbolical and allegorical? Spenser's *Færie Queen*, "the Poet's Poem," is an allegory.

When, indeed, the artist desires to teach us a great spiritual truth, he invariably expresses it under the form of an allegory or symbol. For the soul dreams 'neath the star-sown sky of symbol. It is spiritually its lisping language—the divine form of its expression.

Not only are many of our great poems created under the form of a symbol, but some of our most significant short poems, lyrics that burn and flash and stir our souls with deepest feeling and clearest light, are expressed in form of symbol. As I have already said, it is through the

symbol that the artist teaches us great ethical truths. Was there ever a finer example of this than the truth set forth by Elizabeth Barrett Browning under the form of a symbol? Her thought-freighted poem, so highly symbolic, might be termed "The Cost of a Poet." It certainly throws light on the office and function of poetry, and because of this I desire to quote in its entirety her poem, "A Musical Instrument":

What was he doing, the great god Pan,
 Down in the reeds by the river?
 Spreading ruin and scattering ban,
 Splashing and paddling with hoofs of a goat
 And breaking the golden lilies afloat
 With the dragon-fly on the river?

He tore out a reed, the great god Pan,
 From the deep, cool bed of the river.
 The limpid water turbidly ran,
 And the broken lilies a-dying lay,
 And the dragon-fly had fled away,
 Ere he brought it out of the river.

High on the shore sate the great god Pan,
 While turbidly flowed the river,
 And hacked and hewed as a great god can
 With his hard, bleak steel at the patient reed
 Till there was not a sign of a leaf, indeed,
 To prove it fresh from the river.

He cut it short, did the great god Pan,
 (How tall it stood in the river!)
 Then drew the pith like the heart of a man
 Steadily from the outside ring,
 Then notched the poor, dry, empty thing
 In holes as he sate by the river.

"This is the way," laughed the great god Pan,
 (Laughed while he stae by the river!)
 "The only way since gods began
 To make sweet music, they could succeed."
 Then dropping his mouth to a hole in the reed,
 He blew in power by the river!

Sweet, sweet, sweet, O Pan,
 Piercing sweet by the river!
 Blinding sweet, O great god Pan!
 The sun on the hill forgot to die,
 And the lilies revived and the dragon-fly
 Came back to dream on the river.

Yet half a beast is the great god Pan
 To laugh as he sits by the river,
 Making a poet out of a man.
 The true gods sigh for the cost and the pain—
 For the reed that grows never more again
 As a reed with the reeds of the river.

Yes, verily, the true gods do sigh for the
 cost and pain in making a poet out of a
 man. He shall henceforth see all things
 not through a colored glass, darkly, but
 with that inner eye, which, to the material

and gross is sealed, but which is full of vision to the inspired and chosen few. His soul henceforth shall be in touch with both the lowly and Divine, for the function and office of poetry is to interpret unto man the glory of God in the universe.

A WEEK IN ROME

No other city in Europe holds such interest for the tourist and scholar as Rome. It is a city which speaks to the soul through the lips of well-nigh three thousand years. Such a dramatic note runs through its life. The ancient and the modern world here unite. The Coliseum, with its tragic memories, salutes across the centuries beneath the paling stars of morn the glorious dome that crowns the Mother Church of Christendom — St. Peter's. Every monument within the City of the Seven Hills speaks eloquently of the past and marks the march of civilization. Now it is the tomb of an emperor, now it is a triumphal arch, now it is the buried remains of a church of the fifth century. God's finger has written across the face of the Eternal City. Well might Byron write:

“While stands the Coliseum Rome shall stand,
When falls the Coliseum Rome shall fall,
And when Rome falls— the world!”

I remember well the evening that I arrived in *Roma Immortalis*. It was Saturday, August 31, 1900. Sunday morning at an early hour I issued from my room in the Hotel Laurati, that I might hear my first mass in the Eternal City and get a peep into the glories of Rome. There is access to every art gallery and museum in Rome on Sundays without money and without price. You know, gentle reader, that Italy is a land of art, and Florence and Rome are its centers. And the people! There are no such men and women in the world as in Rome. Modern Roman civilization must, indeed, be refining, else how account for the fact that in no other part of the world will you meet such beautiful types of cultured men and women. Italy did more than preserve and hand down to the modern world Greek and Roman culture. She fashioned the most polished life of the Europe of the Middle Ages and filled the courts and

universities of foreign lands with diplomats, scholars and artists.

What a wonderful city Florence must have been in the Middle Ages—so democratic yet so artistocratic! Just think of the fact that Florence produced a greater number of eminent men, starred the world with more genius during one century of the Middle Ages than did great metropolitan, throbbing London, with its teeming multitudes, in three hundred years.

Italy was the shrine of the Middle Ages, and has retained its pilgrimages to the present day. If Erasmus visited Naples, Bologna and Rome, and found inspiration in the land of Virgil and Dante, so did Germany's great but pantheistic poet, Goethe, sojourn in this land of art and inspiration. And so this poetic pilgrimage has continued—now Byron, now Shelley, now Browning, finding new themes, new thought, new fire, fresh desire in the land whose shores are lapped by the blue Mediterranean.

But the greatest fact in the life and history of Rome is the Pope. Here the White Shepherd of mankind has worn, through every fortune and vicissitude since St. Peter was crucified for his Master, the tiara. Rome is, indeed, a city of far-reaching and linked memories. It was great before the Goths, Huns and Vandals swept down from the North; it was great before Charlemagne had fashioned his Frankish kingdom; it was great before the Greeks dreamed out their Empire on the shores of the Bosphorus; it was great before Columbus, standing at the port of Palos, in Spain, turned his piercing gaze towards the undiscovered continent in the West. It is great today, not in commerce, not in the goodly gifts of earth, not in the work of man, but in the work of God. The Apostolic Mission fills the city with a glory seen and realized but through the eye of faith. Not St. Peter's, not St. Paul's without the walls, not Santa Maria Maggiore, but the

tomb of the Apostles under the altar of St. Peter's draws all Christian hearts to Rome. The feeble old man who, leaning upon a staff, lights up the gardens of the Vatican with his benign smile and directs with finger of conscience the wayward nations must inevitably soon sleep in "dull, cold marble," but the "lumen in cœlo" will not disappear—it will but blaze brighter as the higher and better things of the twentieth century enfold the life of man.

A week in Rome is a short span of time for sightseeing. Yet to a New World pilgrim it reveals much that deepens interest in the historic and artistic past; in life-dramas enacted when the centuries were young; in the dreams and aspirations of Roman genius rocked and nurtured under Italian skies.

I shared my attention while in Rome with the living and the dead, with the past and the present. The archæologist need not hunger for material in Rome. He has

enough for a lifetime if that lifetime covered ten centuries. Excavation always goes on. It was reported when I was there that the tomb of Romulus had been found, but my guide, Augusto Benincasa, after I had broken a bottle of *vino bianco* with him, assured me in great confidence that it was not really the tomb of the founder of the Roman Empire. A wise skepticism is a good thing to have about you in Rome. It will serve you much better than Wordsworth's "wise passiveness." I would not say that your Roman is dishonest, but he is a very clever casuist. Indeed, it must be said that your Roman is very enterprising, and I should not pause to say that if there was any money in it he would not hesitate to dig up the bones of his grandfather.

But let me turn from the ancient quarter of Rome—from the Coliseum, where Nero and Domitian disported themselves from the columnal remains of the Forum which was once wont to echo with Latin

oratory from Trajan's column, which marked the victory of Roman arms and turn to the glory of Italian art as we find it in the Vatican picture galleries. The Popes in every age have been the patrons—sometimes munificent patrons, as in the case of Leo X, one of the Florentine Medicis—of the arts and sciences. But art must have a conscience—without moral tone, aspiration, infinitude, art is of the earth earthy. So vile, coarse photography—sensual veritism without idealization, has never found a home or housing in the Vatican.

As is well known, one of the greatest painters of all times is Raphael. He was the culmination of the Christian school of Italian painters, which was Byzantine in its origin. To it belong such well-known names as Fra Angelico, Perugino and Bartolommeo. If you would study the work of the great Florentine painter, Raphael, go to Rome—go to the Vatican. Some of Raphael's great paintings are

"The Sistine Madonna," "The Transfiguration," "The Dispute Upon the Holy Sacrament," "The School of Athens," "The Encounter of St. Leo the Great with Attila." All these are in the Vatican, except the "Sistine Madonna," which is in the Dresden Art Gallery.

It is worth noting here that the artistic genius of England in painting tends to find expression in water colors, the artistic genius of France in pastel, and the artistic genius of Italy in fresco. Leonardo da Vinci's great painting, "The Last Supper," is fresco work.

As to the great churches of Rome, and Rome is essentially the city of churches, the Mother Church of Christendom, St. Peter's, does not impress you when you first visit it. You require to study it day by day—yes, I might say week by week, before its architectural greatness grows upon you. Its harmony of detail is so marked that you do not for some time realize its size. It will be remembered that

its foundation stone was laid in 1506 and it reached its completion in 1629.

But let me here turn from St. Peter's to the great Father of Christendom—our Holy Father Pope Leo XIII—and briefly present him to my readers as I saw His Holiness in the summer of 1900. During my stay in the Eternal City I learned that the Holy Father was in a few days to grant an audience, or perhaps it would be more correct to say, give his benediction in St. Peter's to the thousands of pilgrims who were flocking into the city. Now my problem was to smuggle myself into St. Peter's as a pilgrim, and this I did with the assistance of my guide and a very generous "tip." Here is the ticket that admitted me, in good Dantean Italian:

ANTICAMERA PONTIFICIA AL VATICANO.

Biglietto d'ammissione alla Basilica Vaticana
per ricevere la Benedizione di Sua Santità nel
giorno Giovedì 6 Settembre 1900 alle ore 11¼.

Il Maestro di Camera di Sua Santità,

Cagiano de Azevedo.

It is said that forty thousand pilgrims gathered in St. Peter's to receive the Pope's benediction. It was a cosmopolitan crowd, with, of course, the Italian—the Sicilian Italian predominating. I stood to the right of the railing which surrounds the tomb of the Apostles and chatted in brief Italian sentences with those around me while awaiting the arrival of the Holy Father. Suddenly the whisper was passed along the line, "Here comes the Holy Father," and, borne in his sedan above the heads of the pilgrims by six stalwart Swiss guards, the successor of St. Peter, clad in white, wearing the papal tiara, passed up the aisle blessing the huge multitude with uplifted hand and dispensing such a sweet and kindly smile as could only have found lodgment in the great and noble soul of the Vicar of Christ.

Pope Leo XIII is one of the great Popes of a distinguished and illustrious line of Popes. His sovereignty deals not

with earthly statutes. He is, indeed, the true father of the faithful—the central fact of our intellectual and moral world. For crowns may crumble, scepters may smash, thrones may tumble, but the successor of St. Peter reigns in the Eternal City, the Viceregent of Christ and dispenser of His heavenly treasures, gifts and blessings to man.

THE IRISH DRAMATIC MOVEMENT

What are the conditions which give rise to the creation of a national drama? Corneille and Racine and Molière appear in France, and a glorious and fruitful dramatic era is ushered in; Lope de Vega and Calderon light up the literary firmament of Spain and the Spanish theatre is enriched for all time; Henrik Ibsen in our own day, by the subtle and searching dramatic gifts of his soul, gives the Norwegian theatre a place in the great world of drama—and we think immediately of this great Scandinavian, not, indeed, as a Shakespeare, but rather as a nineteenth century prober of society whose dramas are but so many clinic reports, rehearsed upon the stage.

It must be confessed that it is impossible to explain the advent of genius. Shakespeare came after the Morality and Mys-

tery Plays had lost their hold on the English people and the human mind was reaching out for conquest and discovery. His dramatic genius, while representative of the Anglo-Saxon mind, is as universal as humanity. He scanned the mountain tops of the Middle Ages and caught the glow of a new sun lighting up their summits. As we read Shakespeare's plays we feel the vital freshness of a new dawn. If ten silent centuries speak through the lips of Dante, the great awakened mind of the Middle Ages, with its prophetic, scientific and humanistic heart-throbbings, finds fit utterance in the dramas of Shakespeare. His genius truly incarnates a new order of things.

It is, perhaps, too early as yet to measure the character and worth of the Irish dramatic movement, which within recent years has attracted so much attention. But we may here indicate its purpose and trend and, analyzing it as a reflection and exponent of Irish life and character, state

frankly its merits and limitations, or let us rather say its defects.

It is worth noting that, while the Irish Gaelic Revival and the Irish Dramatic Movement are not exactly co-radical, they have largely sprung from the same impulse and are really the fruit of the same dewy morn. And this dewy morn marks a rebirth of the Irish soul which for centuries has been prisoned or a wanderer among the alien nations of the earth.

I know nothing so pathetic as a man who has lost his nationality. Though rich in the goods of the world, he is poor, indeed, for his very soul has been stripped to the bone. He is practically an outcast among men, going about apologizing for the accident of his birth. Alas! this has been the fate of the Irishman for centuries. Will it continue?

Let us hope not. As a well-known Irish writer of today says, "There is something, be it instinct or the living subconscious tradition of an almost dead civili-

zation, that says to nearly every Irish heart, 'Thou shalt be Irish: thou shalt not be English.' "

To this end the Gaelic League of Ireland, with its patriotic and gifted leader, Dr. Douglas Hyde, is laboring, and it has already accomplished much. To this end, too, have the members of the Irish Dramatic Movement, Lady Gregory, William Butler Yeats, Lennox Robinson, William Boyle, T. C. Murray and the late John Millington Synge labored. Whatever be the defects of their Irish dramas as portrayals of Irish life and character, the sincerity of their patriotism cannot well be questioned.

Of course, we must not forget that Irish character has been evolved or delineated for centuries by dramatists, novelists and actors. It has been the work of the Elizabethan playwrights, Shakespeare, Ben Johnson, Dekker and Ford; and later of Smollett, Sheridan, Thackeray, Maria Edgeworth, George Mere-

dith, Farquhar, Lover, Lever, Carleton, Dion Boucicault and Bernard Shaw; and the actors, Chauncey Olcott and Andrew Mack in America. But much of all this has been caricature. Few, if any, of all these have touched the soul of Ireland. What is most significant in Irish life has been passed over. They have known Ireland, and represented her from the outside, but not from the inside. They never once touched the hem of her spiritual robe, and this spiritual robe has been since the days of Saint Patrick Ireland's every-day garment.

Let it be said here, too, that the Irish dramatists of today are neither aliens nor visitors to Ireland. They were born and bred on its soil, and should, therefore, know Ireland from within as well as from without. Yeats, Synge and Robinson passed their youth among their fellow-countrymen and had, therefore, every opportunity of knowing the inner life of the Irish people. They were nursed amid

the faith and traditions of the people. There seems, however, to be an Ireland, as Charles Bewley points out in the *Dublin Review* for January, 1913, that these playwrights do not know, an Ireland which is not bounded by the four seas, but by history, religion and tradition.

Now it is a well-known fact that among the Celts, whether of Ireland, Scotland, Wales or Brittany, are to be found today traces of Pagan life that existed before their conversion to Christianity. Of course, these Pagan primitive habits of thought and action will, to some extent, be found among the people of all European countries. But perhaps these primitive habits have persisted stronger and longer among the Celts than among any other people of Europe. You have but to visit Brittany, in France, and attend some of the fêtes of the people to be assured of this. The Celt holds so strongly to the past and is so full of imagination that superstition has ever a strong hold

on his mind. He is a creature of supernaturalism and never a child of the dull earth.

Fascinated by traces of this old Pagan life, with its touches of superstition and its rough and passionate outbursts, both Yeats and Synge have virtually built their literary work upon this ancient Pagan Gældom and labeled it Irish drama. But this is no more Irish drama representing Irish life and Irish character of today than would a drama by Pinero dealing with the savage deeds of the Anglo-Saxons before the coming among them of Saint Augustine be representative of English life and English character of today. Yeats and Synge found, or thought they found, certain dramatic stuff among the peasantry of Ireland and forthwith proceeded to build up Irish dramas representative of Ireland of today. Both went to London and Paris for their ideals of drama, and then went to Ireland to find the elements of character

and incidents upon which to construct their dramas; and when they could not find the characters they wanted they invented them. "The favorable comparisons," says Francis Bickley in his study of Synge, "between Irish women and the women of England or Scotland in the matter of chastity, was a trump card in the hands of the Nationalists. Here was a writer who seemed to call it in question. Such a thing was impolitic, if no worse. It goes without saying that Synge had no desire to lower his compatriots in the eyes of the world. But if he had only found one unchaste woman in the four Provinces and had thought her the right stuff for drama, he would have dramatized her, or if he had found none he would have invented one had his purpose required it."

Now the work of the dramatist is to represent life, idealized if you will, but full of truth. Synge's purpose in building up or creating his Irish dramas

should be to represent Irish life, idealized if you will also, but full of truth. How, I would ask Mr. Bickley, can this be done if Synge departs so far from truth as to create an unchaste Irish woman in a country where feminine chastity is supreme, and then hold such a woman up—represent her on the stage as typical of the women of Ireland?

Let us remember, too, that while we are permitted for dramatic purposes both to idealize and exaggerate, the basis of both idealization and exaggeration must be truth. See, for instance, how admirably Shakespeare observes this in his splendid dramatic creations. Nor would Shakespeare, we may well suppose, were he to write a drama representative of Irish life today, leave out its most important element, the element of religion. Let us see what the greatest of all dramatists does in this respect. He finds an Italian tale telling of the tragedy of a pair of "star-crossed lovers," and he builds up

under the fair skies of Verona a drama truly representative, if idealized, of Italian life in a mediæval city. Does he leave out the spiritual? Not at all. The good old friar is most sympathetically drawn. He gives us a tragedy of the North, with all its coarse carousal in Hamlet, but religion finds a voice, though that voice comes from the purging chambers of Purgatory.

Unfortunately, John Millington Synge lacked the spiritual constitution of a great dramatist. Yet he had many gifts, and not the least of these was his excellent dramatic technique. His knowledge of Gaelic, too, gave him that splendid command of Irish dialect which fills his lines with a certain rich Irish flavor and savor not found in the work of any other Irish dramatist. Irish dialect is not a mouth-ing of e's and a's, as some writers would have us believe, but rather the Irish turn of thought as set forth in the Gaelic language and translated faithfully into the

English tongue. Synge, too, was quick to catch the accent of the Irish heart in its deepest and saddest tragedies. His humor at times is as bewildering as that of Cervantes. He has left the "Playboy of the Western World" as an enigma to mankind. He who would interpret the significance of this drama must needs enter the inner chamber of the genius of John Millington Synge. To my mind, while it is well constructed, it is of all Synge's plays the least happy as a portrayal of Irish character. There are many successful elements in it, but Synge has put into this creation too much of the improbable and fictitious. Sometimes, too, some of its lines approach blasphemy, and this synthesis of irreverence, to use a mild expression, is so marked a characteristic of the whole drama that after witnessing its performance a feeling of disgust, mingled with anger, fills the mind. In this play Synge, to use his own

term, "collaborated" too well, using his favorite elements too lavishly.

One thing Synge often forgets, too, as a playwright, and that is that the abnormal element alone will not yield us a great drama. Side by side with it we must have the normal. Shakespeare never forgets this. There is not a play of the great dramatist in which the abnormal is not set off by the normal. The "Playboy of the Western World" is a very rioting of the abnormal. How joy can issue out of it, though keyed as a comedy, I cannot see. It is altogether too preposterously abnormal.

It is easy to discern the strength and defects of Synge in his drama. Wherever it is a question of the primitive passions of the Celt and the psychology of his ancient racial beliefs surviving in even the slightest form in the Ireland of today, Synge as a creator and portrayer is strong and a master of his work. Witness for instance his marvelous one-act

tragedy, "Riders to the Sea." Here our playwright is dealing with two elements that are entirely, dramatically speaking, in harmony with his genius: the ruthless and all-devouring element of the sea and that wistful "second sight" of the Celt which lies on the borderland between prophecy and predestination.

For me this terrible tragedy is by far the greatest thing that Synge has done, nor do I know of any one-act drama that moves along with such swiftness and intensity or fills the stage from the very outset with such an atmosphere of impending tragedy as "Riders to the Sea." This is surely Synge's masterpiece, and it is his masterpiece because it reveals best Synge's dramatic grasp of the materials and elements of the tragedy. But pray notice how little of the spiritual element there is in this tragedy. Forsooth, because Synge was little concerned with the part religion played in the tragedy. With the exception of a slight evidence of Chris-

tian faith, this tragedy might have been written when the Druid kings held sway in Ireland. It is true that, at the close, Maurya gives utterance to a Christian resignation something higher than Pagan fatalism. The trouble with Synge was that in his study and portraiture of Irish character he emphasized certain qualities that are either absent altogether in the Irish or are but minor attributes. In every instance he stressed the abnormal, with no thought of its normal accompaniment. As a result of this we have savagery, irreverence and blasphemy and a flouting of the sacrament of marriage as characteristic of the Ireland of today. Is it any wonder, then, that every self-respecting Irishman holds such a drama as the "Playboy of the Western World" as a parody and perversion of Irish peasant life, a libel on Irish national character, and immoral both in language and plot?

Let us consider here for a moment how Synge's plays are viewed by impartial

scholars and critics. M. Bourgeois, of Paris, France, has probably published the best and most exhaustive study of the work of John Millington Synge yet given out. Here is what he says in his "J. M. Synge and the Irish Theatre," touching the un-Irish character of Synge's plays:

"A more distinctly un-Irish element in Synge's plays is his non-religious view of life. Doubtless that had an artistic cause: the desire to return to the relentless savagery of ancient Paganism. But Synge's archaic quest of the older Gaelic civilization made him blind to the profounder spirit of modern Ireland. In a way the ancient heathendom may be said to survive in the uncontrollable temperament and passionate outbursts of the average Irish peasant of today; but this is only a superficial appearance; at bottom he is an ardently religious being whose whole life is colored by faith and belief—especially Catholic faith. This aspect of Irish mind is simply ignored in Synge; it

has no place in his works; and on this score his fellow-countrymen are justified in finding fault with his plays."

Of course, we know very well that the dramatist is not compelled to treat exclusively of the normal in his works. The abnormal certainly has a place upon the stage—it is both suggestive and interesting. But if dramatists treat of the abnormal they must treat it as abnormal. For instance, Shakespeare's *Macbeth* is abnormal, and when presented to the public is regarded as abnormal. The murder of Duncan shocks every audience, and as Mr. Bewley says in the *Dublin Review*, "Shakespeare's indictment in this play is against an individual and not against a nation. In Synge's hands the story would have taken a very different shape: *Macbeth* would openly exult in his murder, and Banquo and Macduff vie with one another in an ecstasy of enthusiastic loyalty to the murderer: retribution would

only follow when it was discovered that Duncan was not dead after all."

Yet, however faulty may be many of the plays of Synge, Yeats, Lady Gregory and others of the Irish dramatists, they mark a decided renaissance in the literary life of Ireland. With this stirring and awakening of the soul of Ireland and the dawning of new national life among the people, we may, indeed, look some day in the near future for a true representative Irish drama.

CATHOLIC JOURNALISTS AND JOURNALISM

Let me begin this paper by saying that the Catholic press of America is not very creditable as an expression or reflection of Catholic life. Not, indeed, but that our Catholic editors are a noble band of toiling, struggling, self-sacrificing men. They are all that. Yet, somehow or other, our Catholic journalism in America is weak. It does not by any means measure up to that of other countries. In a word, it is not worthy of our members as a Catholic people in this country.

Nor is the writer of this paper alone in this opinion. In a recent number of *The Rosary Magazine* the editor, commenting on the "yellow" journalism of our day, points out the need of a better Catholic press in this country in the following timely and pertinent paragraph:

"There is imperative need of a Catholic awakening in the matter of the public press. It is high time that the eighteen millions of Catholics in America came to a realization of their responsibility and made effective protest against the present intolerable conditions. Other countries less Catholic, numerically, than our own, support a vigorous and efficient daily Catholic press, and periodical literature receives in them the encouragement it so richly deserves. Here in America, where religion is unhampered, no English Catholic daily exists, and periodical literature is so poorly supported that many excellent magazines have been forced to suspend publication. The situation is by no means a creditable one for American Catholicity, and the sooner it is remedied the better it will be both for the Church and the nation."

These are plain words, but not too plain or too strong. The truth is that not only have we not as yet a single English

Catholic daily paper in America, but the great body of our English Catholic weeklies are poor affairs. Why is this? Well, to my mind, it is due to several causes. In the first place, the Catholics of this country have not yet become a reading people. They are fully satisfied with the material world around them and are hardly yet alive to the needs of the Kingdom of Heaven. They study so closely the needs of the kingdom of this earth that the needs of faith and the higher things of the mind and soul count not.

When you look out upon the field of American Catholic journalism, you are really amazed at the little that we have accomplished in this direction. Why, even Australia, with less than a million Catholics, has a better Catholic press than we have. Little Switzerland, with less than one-third of its population Catholic, has a much better Catholic press than we have; while Holland, with almost a like proportion of Catholics, with

its fifteen Catholic dailies, seventy-six Catholic weeklies and seventy monthlies, is far in advance of what we may hope to be within the next half century. Even England, with its handful of Catholics, has two Catholic weeklies—the *Catholic Times*, of Liverpool, and the *Tablet*, of London, which are of a very superior order and character. I make no reference here to the magnificent and masterly Catholic press of Germany, decidedly the most vigorous in all Europe, so creditably represented by such able journals as the Cologne *Volkszeitung*, the Berlin *Germania* and the *Allgemeine Rundschau* of Munich, nor to the Catholic press of France, which during the last few years, owing to the persecution of the Church in the land of Ste. Genevieve, has developed a strength and vigor creditable, indeed, to the Catholics of that country. Had this Catholic journalistic renaissance marked the France of twenty-five years ago, it is probable that no ex-

plotting church-despoilers would have ever appeared upon the scene.

Now, according to Rev. Father Spillane, S. J., in an article, "The Catholic Press in Europe and America," contributed to *America* some two years ago, there are in the United States in all one hundred and twenty-eight Catholic papers, of which fourteen are dailies and one hundred and fourteen weeklies. These one hundred and twenty-eight papers represent journals printed in English, German, French, Polish, Bohemian, Italian, Slavonic, Magyar, Dutch, Croatian, Spanish and Indian. Of the dailies, seven are French, four Polish, two German and one Bohemian.

Does it not seem astounding that up to the present no English Catholic daily has been launched in the United States? I do not know what proportion of the sixteen million Catholics are English-speaking, but suppose we put it at eight million. The other eight million, speak-

ing a foreign tongue, maintain fourteen dailies. But, perhaps, you will say that the fact that they are foreigners, speaking an alien tongue, binds them together in support of their own dailies. This, to an extent, is true. But is it possible that language has a more unifying force than religion? It certainly does not speak well for the English-speaking Catholics of our country, if the needs of faith are not higher than those of language.

I have said that the Catholic people of this country are not a reading people, and I am quite sure of this fact. Perhaps you will say that they read the daily secular press. But even that would not constitute them a reading people. Reading is a good deal more than a pastime. It is a serious act of the mind, implying the presence of an intellectual hunger that must be satisfied. Now, this intellectual hunger is not the result of culture, or college training, but is present in every normal mind, as sure and constant as the ap-

petite for three daily repasts. It is true that the appetite for eating is imperious, while the appetite for reading may be flouted without any danger to bodily life. But the appetite of the mind neglected has also its evil results. For as the body will weaken, emaciate and lose all life-power without proper nourishment, so the mind shrivels, narrows and withers, unless sustained by a fit and proper diet of thought, which, by the way, is largely supplied through the medium of wholesome reading.

Of course, we have many, many Catholics in this country who are careful and serious readers. This we know very well. Yet, the fact remains that the great bulk of them are not. Would you not think that where such activity is shown by our "courts" and "councils" in organizing "box socials," "smokers" and "vaudevilles," and all that belongs to chasing the flitting hours with tripping feet, some interest might be cultivated, too, in the for-

tunes of the Catholic press? Would it or should it be too much to expect that Catholic families that willingly pay homage to the exactions of "society," in the outlay of time and money, would, too, subscribe for the Catholic paper, whose editor is ever battling for their rights—a sentinel in the watch-towers of faith, a warrior with buckler and shield, parrying, defending and advancing?

Of what use is all this society bluff and bubble, if we Catholics do not march under intellectual orders? We speak with pride of the increase in our numbers, but does the character and quality of our Catholic life keep pace with this increase? Are there not thousands of Catholic homes in our land today empty of Catholic ideals, destitute of that quickening life which comes through the fires of faith, lit up by the torch of Catholic intelligence? How then, I ask, can our Catholic people be intelligent if they neither read nor think, and, alas! how many thou-

sands of them do neither? I often wonder what becomes in after life, in the lists of knightly struggle, amid the largesses that are showered from the world's hands, of the innumerable young men and women who annually garland the graduating stages of our Catholic colleges and academies. Presumably, they have been drinking in for years, under careful guidance and direction, the best there is in Catholic life and literature. Have they proved true to the principles imbibed, or have they hearkened to the tempter and looked down towards Camelot, weaving into the web of life not the spiritual beauty of Catholic truth and faith, but the shadow of sin and falsehood that falls athwart their path on every side in a world whose morality is oft based not upon God's decalogue, but upon the shifting judgments of humanity, with all its caprices of fashions and passions?

Is it, I ask, too much to expect that these young graduates, full of the flush

and optimism of a ribbon-tied diploma or degree, should, when they go out into the world, be able to do something for the furtherance of Catholic journalism and Catholic letters? And the question that besets us here is: Are they doing it?

But, you will probably ask here, what has this to do with Catholic journalists and journalism? I answer, a great deal. We may have our Dr. Brownsons, our Frederick Lucases, our Louis Veuillots, but if our Catholic people, one and all, are not alive to the needs and the value of an able and vigorous Catholic press, and are not willing to do everything in their power to support it, your Brownsons, your Veuillots, your Lucases will labor and toil and make sacrifice in vain.

Of course, it will be alleged—and with a great deal of truth—that a great many of our Catholic papers in this country are poorly edited and do not interest the Catholic reader. Unfortunately, this charge and contention has a basis of fact.

But, if the Catholic journals of this country are not well edited, pray, who is to blame? You cannot expect one man to do the work of three; and that is what most of the Catholic editors of this country are doing. However, doing the work of three would not be so bad if the Catholic editor was not expected to do this work for half the salary that should be attached to it. Is it too much, I ask, to expect that the Catholic journalist, whose scholarship has entailed long years of study and very great expense, and whose reputation as a writer is firmly established, should at least receive as much salary as the business manager of a Catholic journal, whose intellectual equipment is generally inferior to that of the editor, and whose occupation is divided between looking after his subscription list and instructing his advertising agents? We wonder, some times, why we have not better Catholic journals in this country. It is, indeed, plain to anybody that we can

never have in this country first-class Catholic journals until we concede to the Catholic editor his place, and not reduce him financially to the position of a literary tramp. Let me say that, if this statement is challenged, I shall go further into the matter and publish the salaries of the editors of twenty of our leading Catholic papers.

Touching the question of the salary of Catholic editors, Mr. A. M. Raybould, in an able paper on "The Apostolate of the Press," contributed to a recent number of *The Rosary Magazine*, says:

"The laborer is worthy of his hire, and the best work should command the best pay. The man who is devoting his life and talents to the furthering of Catholic ideals through good journalism is doing a valuable work for the Church, and deserves not only a wage by which to live, but also that support and encouragement without which the best work must ultimately fail.

"If the Catholic press is to meet the needs of the times, if it is to reach the level of the non-Catholic press, it must be able to secure the best journalistic effort and to pay for it as it is paid for elsewhere. Owing to the comparative poverty of the Catholic body, and perhaps also to the higher aims of Catholic journalism which militate against its financial success, this is impossible without the co-operation of the whole Catholic community. If the Catholic press is to be that mighty power for good which it might be and which the times demand, it must be raised by the generosity of the public to that standard of excellence which carries with it the assurance of success."

But we will never have "that standard of excellence" till we have strong and scholarly Catholic editors behind the editorial pens. It does not follow that the Catholic editor, in order to be a success, should be an academician or a poet or a

savant, but he should be a scholar of both deep and broad information, possessing a profound and accurate knowledge of Catholic truth, having a clear perception of the life and policy of the Catholic Church in every age, and especially in our own age, and be able to detect error in a moment, whether under a social, economic or art form. In a word, he should possess, above all, the Catholic instinct.

But, you will ask, can such editors be found? Decidedly so. You will find them on the great Catholic papers of Europe; and they can be grown here in America, if we will but make the conditions of their growth favorable. We have had our McMasters, our Hickeys, our Boyle O'Reillys, our Father Lamberts and our Father Cronins. Surely, we do not despair of finding their successors amid the golden journalistic grain now being sown in the Catholic furrows of America. But we must learn to treat our Catholic journalists with sympathy

and justice. It is true that we are living in a hard, material age, when the idealism of Catholic journalism is unevenly matched with the realism of selfishness and greed, and honor is well-nigh an empty name in the household and economy of the business relations of life. But this, nevertheless, should not shut out from our vision and realization the duty we owe our Catholic journalists and those who hold aloft the torch that illumines and leads to higher and nobler planes of life and living.

Several of our Catholic colleges have recently established departments of journalism where young men can equip themselves for journalistic work, where they can gain not only the necessary knowledge of the general principles of journalism, but acquire, too, what is far more essential, a feeling of the moral responsibility that rests upon them as Catholic journalists.

It is well, indeed, that these chairs of journalism have been established in our Catholic colleges, but if the Catholic press in America has nothing better to offer in a pecuniary way than is now in its keeping, if it looks upon the Catholic editor as solely a kind of an adventitious necessity for the exploitation of the business end of the paper, these young Catholics, with all their fine journalistic ethics in their college handbags, will, after their graduation from the department of journalism, betake themselves straightway to the offices of our daily secular papers, where their work will meet with due recognition and fair compensation. Here their Catholic principles will assuredly suffer a shock, for they will find that the moral journalistic code of the office is sometimes no higher than the dividends of the paper or the veneered respectability of society.

Now, what is the burden of my arraignment of the Catholic press of this country

today? First, that it is weak and entirely inadequate to the needs of the Catholic people of this country. Secondly, that this weakness is due chiefly to two causes: lack of moral and financial support on the part of our Catholic people, who are wanting intellectually in an appreciation of the value of a Catholic journal and its need as a defender and exponent of Catholic principles, and the further fact that we lack as yet in this country a great corps of strong, scholarly, vigorous and well-informed Catholic journalists, ready to cope with any question that may arise.

Note well, too, I pray you, that in the whole history of Catholic journalism in this country there has not been one single Catholic journal that has achieved greatness save through the greatness of its editor. This is really a truism and, therefore, needs no demonstration—no proof.

It was a McMaster who made the New York *Freeman's Journal*, and the pen of a Father Lambert who again gave it a pow-

erful resurrection. It was the journalistic genius of a Boyle O'Reilly who made the *Boston Pilot* at one time the greatest Catholic paper in America. It was a Father Cronin's facile and polished pen that made the *Catholic Union and Times*, of Buffalo, N. Y., a welcomed visitor everywhere.

Some of our Catholic editors of today seem to be afraid of making their paper too literary. This is a mistake. Does it, I ask, weaken your argument in discussing a moral or economic question to set it forth in polished or ornate language? Know, too, that the higher things of the soul are not found on the earth measured by the yard. There is a touch of heaven in everything that is good, and this touch of heaven the Catholic journalist would do well to put into his paper.

Now, as to the manner or method of editing a Catholic paper: this is altogether a matter of individual judgment and taste, and must depend upon the ideal

and gifts of the editor himself, and what he wishes specially to emphasize in his work. Nearly all great Catholic journals have some special commendable features. It is, therefore, the height of folly, if not the height of discourtesy, to lecture and schoolmaster a brother journalist as to how he should conduct or better his paper. Of course, we may at all times discuss the general principles of journalism without any violation of journalistic courtesy.

At the first convention of the American Catholic Press Association, held in Columbus, Ohio, in August, 1911, the writer of this paper, referring to the method of editing a Catholic paper, said: "As to the work of Catholic journalism, I do not think that there is any best way to conduct a Catholic journal. We all possess individual gifts. Let each develop his own through the columns of his paper. One journalist is a good paragrapher, another a good feature writer, still another

has the news instinct. Let us, then, give our respective journals the stamp of our own individuality."

In this connection, too, it will be remembered that one member of the Catholic Press Association inferentially held that only official Catholic papers could safely and successfully do the great work of Catholic journalism. Now, touching this, I would say that any Catholic journalist who realizes his position as a Catholic journalist should at all times willingly sit at the feet of Holy Church and learn of her wisdom, for assuredly a Church possessed of the wisdom of nineteen hundred years must know a good deal more than the individual. Yet the difference between voluntarily drinking in this wisdom at the feet of the Church and making of a Catholic paper a mere episcopal echo, is very great. As a species of Catholic journalism I do not think that the latter has ever proved a success.

But, however much Catholic editors may differ in their methods of journalism, they should be one in the bonds of amity, good will and the proclamation of Catholic truth. In no other place can there be better revealed Christian charity and greatness of soul than behind an editorial pen. The true Catholic editor must needs divest himself, if he would do God's work, of all pettiness and all peevishness, all jaundice and jealousy. He stands at all times for Catholic truth and all the Christian charity implied in Catholic truth. His mission is from God, and he must remember at all times the Great Captain under Whom he serves. He should remember, too, that the household of the faith is made up of many races and that in the eyes of his Captain and Master there is no best race. And, therefore, neither by insinuation nor inference will he attack any race or set one in its virtues or merits above another. They are all God's children, and a true Catholic jour-

nalist, a knight of God in the service which he renders, will know no race, yet all.

THE RELATION OF THE CATHOLIC JOURNAL TO CATHOLIC LITERATURE

[A paper read at the Catholic Press Convention, Columbus, Ohio, August, 1911.]

Let me say at the outset that it is in no conventional manner that I express the great pleasure it affords me to be present here today and share in the program of the papers, discussions and deliberations of this convention.

I wish, however, to modify the title of my paper somewhat from what it appears on the printed program, for I am not so much concerned in the good fortune of secular literature as I am in the promotion of Catholic literature, and I therefore desire the title of my subject to read: "The Relation of the Catholic Journal to Catholic Literature."

As you know, I have been assigned a most important subject—one which links

together, so to speak, the intellectual heroism of Catholicity, for assuredly it needs heroism today to carry on the great work of Catholic journalism, and a still greater heroism to devote oneself to the promotion of Catholic letters where in both instances the pecuniary rewards are so small and disheartening.

You remember that in the spiritual development of the Church in the Middle Ages there appeared two great Orders of Mendicant Friars who, by their zeal and virtues, changed the spiritual face of Europe. These two great Orders were marked, respectively, by two great characteristics or virtues—courage, or militancy, if you will, and poverty. May I liken Catholic journalism to the work of St. Dominic, which was essentially a work of courage or militancy, for I regard the first essential of a Catholic journalist to be courage—militancy; and may I liken the work of the Catholic author to the work of the great and humble brown-

hooded friar of Assisi, whose chiefest virtue was poverty.

Then note well, too, that these two great saints of God worked together, aided each other, admired each other, loved each other. So may we hope that Catholic journalism and Catholic authorship will work hand in hand in this our country, admiring each other, aiding each other, loving each other. For, indeed, we scarcely know which the more to admire—a McMaster, a John Boyle O'Reilly, a Father Cronin, a Father Lambert, a Charles J. O'Malley of Catholic journalism, or in the domain of Catholic letters, a Dr. Brownson, towering in massive thought above his fellows, a Father Hecker devoting his life to a setting forth of the fact that there is perfect harmony between Catholic teaching and the spirit of republican institutions, a great Archbishop Spalding giving us his magnificent historical essays, a Brother Azarias, an humble follower of St. de la Salle, the

founder of modern pedagogy, with fine poise, deep insight and broad literary sympathies, giving us in essay form his splendid literary judgments.

These are, indeed, some of the glorious names—Catholic names—that are an inspiration to us today. These giants of Catholic truth and teaching have bequeathed to us their mantles. We justly hold their memories dear. I am sure their spirit has still an abiding place in this assemblage:

"Not here! Oh, yes, our hearts their presence feel;
Viewless, not voiceless, from the distant shells on mem-
ory's shore,
Harmonious echoes steal and names which in the days
Gone by were spells, are blent with that soft music.
If there dwells the spirit here our country's fame to
spread,
While every breast with joy and triumph swells
And earth reverberates to our measured tread,
Banner and wreath should own our reverence for the
dead."

And so we do own our reverence for the dead, and to their memory is erected an altar of gratitude in every heart.

It is evident to every thinking man that the Catholic journal is not only a power for the propagation and defense of Catholic truth, but a potent instrument to spread and, indeed, nurture a Catholic literature. Surely if, as the great Bishop Von Ketteler of Mayence once said, "Were St. Paul, the Apostle, once more to visit the earth and mingle in its strenuous affairs, he would most likely become a journalist," we Catholic journalists cannot set too high a value upon the work—the task intrusted to us, nor can we too fully realize or appreciate the magnificent responsibilities as Catholic editors that are placed in our hands.

We are quite aware that the task of building up a Catholic literature in this country is a difficult one; that the Catholic author has to contend with many things; that in this material and skeptical age, when negation of faith and a blind worship of earthly conquest fill the soul of man on every side, it seems a very spe-

cies of heroism for the Catholic writer, with faith in his heart and upon his lips, to enter the literary lists and share in its jousts and tournaments.

Yet, thank God, we have Catholic men and women of this mould—Catholic men and women who, whether the applause be deafening or scant, the bouquets rained upon them many or few, are ready to uphold Catholic truth and Catholic principles in the literary lists and so contend for that heavenly prize which is not of the gift of kings.

But the question arises here, are we Catholic journalists doing our duty toward these heroic Catholic writers who, contending with adverse circumstances, are laboring to create and build up in this country a veritable Catholic literature? I fear very much that we give them seldom either bouquets or applause.

Now I hold most firmly to the contention that we Catholics must not only create and support our own Catholic educa-

tional institutions, but we must also create, nurture and maintain our own Catholic literature. This is clearly evident to any one who realizes our position as a Catholic people.

What part, think you, then, should the Catholic journalist take in the maintenance of this Catholic literature—in its dissemination, nay, I was going to say, in its popularization? Assuredly, a great and significant part. Indeed, the Catholic journal should be a leading factor in the fostering of a Catholic literature. It should, through its columns, be an inspiration itself to all that is highest and best in Catholic art and literature, and should constantly familiarize its readers with the great Catholic literary masterpieces of every land. If the Catholic journal does not do this, pray where will our Catholic youth find it?

Behold how our Catholic schools and academies have multiplied during the past twenty-five years! What splendid

opportunity there is in them for the furthering of Catholic literature. Our Catholic journal that finds its way into these cloisters of prayer and meditation—into these halls and sanctuaries of study—should it not be a guide, an inspiration, an unerring voice to these good religious, in their studies, in their daily readings, in their literary *causeries* with their pupils?

In the last analysis, then, the Catholic journal is the greatest factor in our country for the promotion of Catholic literature and, through the medium of Catholic literature, for the propagation of Catholic truth.

No Red Cross knight in the Holy Land was ever more vigilant of his duties than should be the Catholic journalist in his relation to every phase of Catholic life around him. Catholic literature is but the expression of Catholic life, and to preserve its sanctity should be the aim and purpose of every true Knight of God.

Now as to the work of Catholic jour-

nalism, I do not think there is any best way to conduct a Catholic journal. We all possess individual gifts. Let each develop his own through the columns of his paper. One journalist is a good paragrapher, another a good editorial writer, another a good feature writer, still another has the news instinct. Let us then give our respective journals the stamp of our own individuality.

There is, however, one thing we can cultivate, and that is amity and good will. As the unity of the Church proves its divine mission, so let the unity of Catholic journalism prove our divine mission as Catholic journalists. Catholic journals may differ in non-essentials, but in one thing we must and should be a unit in the proclamation of Catholic truth. Catholic truth should inform every page, column and line of a Catholic journal. For it would be base and cowardly to betray the standard of Christ under which we serve.

WHAT IS CRITICISM?

The role of the critic, it will readily be admitted, is a difficult and delicate one. He cannot very well be universally popular, for the popular man is he who likes every thing, has no severe canons of taste, is easily satisfied and is most elastic and accommodating in his judgments.

It is Ruskin who says that a strong critic is every man's adversary. It is felt that his business is to seek out the foibles and lay bare that which lacks the virtues of soul and intellect, summing up fearlessly the man and his work.

Yet critics we must have. They are a necessity. What would art and literature be if we had no critics to appraise the work of pen and brush—to extol or condemn, to differentiate between what is of value and what is worthless? Before we are satisfied that a poem or painting is

great we like to have the opinion of connoisseurs as to its value and merit.

But there are critics and critics, and to-day our intellectual life is so full of veneer and pretension that not everyone who offers judgments on art and literature should be regarded as qualified or acceptable to fill the role of critic. In fact, while the creative gift in art and literature here in America is not at all conspicuous today, I am not quite sure but that it exceeds the critical gift amongst us. This is largely owing to the fact that the intellectual *parvenu* has gained and holds such a prominent place in the limelight.

I think we can well say of the true critic, as we say of the poet, "*nascitur non fit.*" That is, the true critic is born with the endowment of a critic—with taste, insight, fine natural discrimination, sense of beauty, and judicial poise. Of course, all these are developed by study and wide reading, but the faculty must be already there,

otherwise all study and reading will be in vain.

Matthew Arnold sets down disinterestedness as the one great rule of criticism, and in this I think he is entirely right. No partisan, however sincere may be his convictions, can be a good critic, for he has but one viewpoint, and that he has taken as a partisan or interested judge. Friendship and cliquism are death to true and valuable criticism, for both imply partisanship and exclude an impartial judgment. Both render a criticism narrow and biased, for they shut out all consideration of literary or artistic merit, save within the radius of a chosen few. Witness to this fact is found in the hundreds of criticisms that fill the pages of our reviews and journals revealing on their very face the partisan spirit of the reviewer.

Yet it is extremely difficult to avoid as a critic the literary, art, religious, or political influence of one's birth, environ-

ment and education. Look, too, at what an important part race plays in our judgments. For an Anglo-Saxon to understand Latin genius or Latin institutions seems to me well-nigh impossible. And you might reverse this and be also close to the truth. Just read, for instance, Voltaire's judgment on Shakespeare, or Taine's valuation of the poet Tennyson.

So every school, too, of political thought, as well as every school of art and literature, has its gospel and ten commandments, and if you would hope to have your work proclaimed or fairly criticised, it would be well that you would enroll yourself first as a member of the esoteric circle. It is hard to get absolute justice and stand outside the door of the temple.

No wonder, then, that the nineteenth century, especially its first half, was characterized by a continuous war among the critics, who fired from behind the ramparts of an *Edinburgh Review*, a *Blackwood's Magazine*, a *Quarterly Review* or

a *London Times*. Nor was it any better within the literary fortifications of Paris. The winged shaft that the Frenchman shoots in literary anger is sure to have much poison on its point, though directed with a death-dealing Gallic grace as it reaches and rankles in the heart of an opponent. For the first half of the nineteenth century was undoubtedly not only an age of religious controversy, but an age of literary controversy as well.

Here in America we have commercialized criticism as we have commercialized well-nigh everything. If the reviewer can see any dollars ahead, with a hint from the business manager, he will readily find complimentary adjectives for the work under review and speak of the "promise and potency in this young rising author." Nay, more, he will insert in the literary columns a cut-and-dried review of a book sent by its publisher, though the puffery should give this "green goods" author a place beside the

great literary immortals—all this, of course, provided there is any money in it for his journal.

Bliss Perry, for some years editor of that literary and sane magazine, the *Atlantic Monthly*, has recently touched upon this point in an article dealing with criticism and reviews. Mr. Perry has further pointed out that a large amount of the reviewing done on our American periodicals and journals is the work of young writers who lack both adequate scholarship and training for the task.

I am not surprised, however, that the work of literary criticism here in America is so inferior. The truth is, we are all in too great a hurry to gain distinction in anything. We will not wait for the seed to spring up, grow strong and ripen. Everything is haste, criticism amongst others. If we do not know a subject, let us pretend we do. Have we not stock phrases supplied to us in art and literature? Who will then dare to prevent us

from using these phrases and thus appear learned?

But, weak as is the secular press of America in its literary criticism and reviews, the Catholic press of this country is still weaker. With the exception of a few Catholic journals, such as *America*, whose literary notes and book reviews are generally scholarly and discriminating, the literary critiques found in American Catholic journals and, indeed, in some of the American Catholic magazines, are not very creditable, revealing sometimes narrowness, sometimes absolute lack of literary judgment, and occasionally personal spleen.

It is not very long ago since a Catholic magazine of this country, in reviewing a volume of poems, some of which it had praised highly a few years before, carved the volume as a dish fit for the gods. The critic may have been some half-baked academy graduate, whose whole knowledge of literature was gained in a regents'

examination. In truth, this supposition is strengthened by the fact that the reviewer in question confounded in the critique the poets of England with those of America, showing thereby even a lack of elementary knowledge of the well-known writers of our day. It is true that our Catholic journalists are very busy—indeed, very often they do the work of three. By the very nature of things, these Catholic writers must be a kind of "*Johannes Factotum*"—editorial writers, knights of the scissors, paragraphers, moral instructors, proofreaders and book reviewers.

We well know, then, what kind of book reviews we may expect. To begin with, the overworked Catholic editor may have but a limited knowledge of books. His time does not permit him to read. And so we get what? Exactly this result: notices of books frequently that have no value as guides to what is worth reading. These notices, or shall we call them reviews, help the publisher, it is true, for

they place his books before the eyes of the public. But do you not think, gentle reader, that a book review should do more than this? In the flood of literary trash—and some of this, too, flowing from Catholic publishing houses—that is every day threatening our intellectual sanity and safety, and particularly the safety of our children, would it not be well if more attention was given in our Catholic journals to an appraisal and recommendation of the books that should have a place in the public libraries which we are supporting with our money—to the works worthy of a place in our homes and in the hands of our children who day by day are being formed in character and soul under our very eye?

We sometimes forget that the Catholic Church is being fashioned, humanly speaking, by that silent intellectual work of which we are unfortunately disposed often to take no notice. Would it not be better, too, if we substituted thoughtful

literary criticism for some of the vapid stuff which chokes the columns of our Catholic journals, such as items witnessing to the trills of Kathleen O'Brien's voice at a Knights of Columbus smoker, or that Rear Admiral Peregrine Maitland, of the British fleet, attended midnight Mass on Christmas Day in Rome, or that a set of vestments was presented to the Rev. Timothy O'Halloran, curate of Cahirciveen, County Kerry, Ireland. It strikes me as a valuator of things that touch us nearly and are significant in our life and contribute to our intellectual and moral welfare that in our Catholic journalism we would do well to give more attention to what is really informing, more attention to the creation of a great, strong Catholic aristocracy of intellect, capable of sustaining a Catholic literature that will reflect truly Catholic life, art and faith in this New World. It is well, indeed, that Kathleen O'Brien sings so charmingly, but her highest and most

graceful notes have an interest only for her family and immediate friends. The fact, too, that Rear Admiral Peregrine Maitland attended Christmas Midnight Mass is of chiefest interest in connection with the welfare of his own soul, and is a flat and uninteresting fact of no value whatever to Patrick Dwyer, living on the far-away banks of the Mississippi or Saskatchewan, while as to the presentation of a set of vestments to a venerable curate away in sunny-souled and beloved Ireland it is a pleasant fact for the Catholic parish of Cahirciveen, but of no earthly interest to a reader of a Catholic journal say in the City of Toronto or the City of San Francisco. Yet our Catholic journals go on pouring out this kind of vapid thing week in and week out, while the Catholic minds of their readers looking for something better starve because of the lack of tonic thought.

I have spoken of the fact that it is difficult to get critics who represent a partic-

ular school of thought to do justice to those who are not of their esoteric circle. The tendency is to magnify the merits of a work because it expresses our own gospel of thought. And this is equally true in the political, philosophical, religious and art world. We need not in criticism subscribe to a man's principles or tenets in either the literary, religious or art order, and yet despite this we should be able as critics to do absolute justice to his work.

The greatest mistake that the Catholic critic sometimes makes is to attack and reduce to dust everything in literature and art that does not grow out of Catholic faith. We all know that the schism of the sixteenth century in England darkened the stream of English literature that overflowed its banks and filled the fields of thought with the seeds of false philosophy from which have blossomed heresies in life and literature and the corrupting flowers of passion in the soul. But Genius

does not select its altar, for it may lure the soul of a Homer or Virgil among Pagan gods, anoint the eyes of a pantheistic Goethe or touch with fire the lips of a Catholic Dante. If Chaucer and Pope were Catholics, Wordsworth and Tennyson were Anglicans and Browning a Non-conformist. We cannot as Catholics accept entirely the philosophical tenets or teachings in the poems of a Wordsworth, a Tennyson, or a Browning, but we can admire their splendid poetic creations and as critics give them a just and worthy appraisement as great artists and inspired singers.

It is true that all great art should minister to truth, for it is at the altar of Catholic truth that it lights its torch, but Nature, too, has a temple, and the lights upon its altar are grateful also to the poetic soul, albeit that its beauty is but a reflection of the Divine Beauty which is the source of all beauty and truth.

Then again we should have a care as to the fitness of the critic who offers us his judgments. The man with poetic endowment can tell us most and best about poetry, the metaphysician can tell us most and best about philosophy and the conclusions of the scientist will be safest within the domain of science. In truth, I should be unwilling to accept the judgments of a philosopher in poetry, or the judgments of a poet in philosophy. That is why I would not care to take the opinion of even the great Dr. Brownson in a discussion of the poetry of Wordsworth or Emerson, for he only sees and values these poets as thinkers, but poets are much more than thinkers. They are thinkers, plus the artist and dreamer, and the purple of their dreams is much finer and more glorious than the subtle-woven tapestry of their thinking. I would rather go to an Aubrey de Vere for his judgments on the poetic work of Wordsworth, for he was a kindred poetic soul, possess-

ing in abundance the precious gift of Catholic faith.

One of the most interesting things in the history of criticism is the contradictory character of the judgments that have been delivered. Greene, a contemporary dramatist, called Shakespeare "an upstart crow beautified with our feathers"; Dr. Johnson wrote of Milton's "Lycidas": "The diction is harsh, the rhymes uncertain and the numbers displeasing"; Horace Walpole compared Dante to "a Methodist parson in Bedlam"; Byron once spoke of the poet Cowper as "that maniacal Calvinist and coddled poet"; the *Edinburgh Review* said of Wordsworth's "Ode to the Daisy," that it was "flat and feeble," while the *Athenaeum*, after Carlyle had published his "French Revolution," wrote the author down "as a blockhead and strenuous failure."

When great epochal writers, with the divine fire of genius in their souls, have been meted out such criticism—such

harsh treatment, the young writer should take courage and neither wince nor lose heart if at times he comes under the lash, remembering well that criticism is not always the conscience of art.

THE RELATION OF THE CATHOLIC SCHOOL TO CATHOLIC LITERATURE

[A paper read before the American Catholic Educational Association, Pittsburgh, Pa., July, 1912.]

When the invitation was extended to me by the Catholic Educational Association to read a paper on "The Relation of the Catholic School to Catholic Literature," I must confess that I readily and eagerly accepted it, feeling that it is a subject fraught with the very deepest import to our Catholic life and progress.

For I have long held to the opinion that we Catholics in this country must not only create and sustain our own Catholic educational institutions, but we must also create and nourish with the sunshine and dews of sympathy and practical support our own Catholic literature; and the best and fittest place—the largest soil and the

surest of production for this literary sowing is unquestionably the Catholic school. Here every Catholic bent of the child mind makes for the sturdiness of Catholic faith in after years.

If life is a warfare of the soul, how can we better equip our boys and girls for this warfare than by putting in their hands the weapons of Catholic truth, forged and fashioned by our great Catholic thinkers—our great Catholic authors?

Up to the present we Catholics have been so busy with our material tasks in this country—constructing cities, projecting railroads, clearing forests, developing mines, that literary culture with us has been a secondary thought; but now that these worthy and gigantic tasks have been well-nigh accomplished, may we not turn aside at times to follow with Sir Galahad the “Gleam” and fashion in lofty rhyme or turret bold the dreams of our soul.

And if this noble work is to be done, if we are to set our ideals of life to the di-

vine orchestration of heaven and make every art the handmaid of God—an acolyte at His altar, we must begin the work and sow the seed in the humble, but beneficent parochial school.

I firmly believe that to a great extent we have neglected this phase of our Catholic education in the past—that we have forgotten that we have Catholic writers who are toiling and have toiled in the literary vineyard of God, generously giving of their gifts to advance His kingdom and so fill our hearts and homes with the aroma and beauty of Catholic truth and teaching.

Look around you today, I pray you, and see what the influence of pernicious and vicious literature is doing among the youth of our land. How can we Catholics, I ask, fold our arms or shut our eyes and say this question concerns us not? It does concern us; it must concern us. If there is unrest today, it is because so-called teachers of humanity are false to

the great truths of God. Distrust and discontent and a false doctrine of morals have driven out of the hearts of the people peace and the wisdom of God; and the secular press and the teacher from his chair in the secular college have to a certain extent co-operated in bringing about this lamentable condition of things.

Because of these influences at work the literature of our day is full of poison—full of false principles. Never in the history of Christianity has the evil one sown so many tares among the wheat of truth. Not alone in things of faith, which directly concern the soul, but in government economics, social life—in every phase of human activity this poison has entered and vitiated life and withered and destroyed as with a killing frost its crowning fruitage.

But how, you ask, shall we Catholics meet this sad condition of things? It must be met as every moral evil is met with the sword of God's truth, and this

must be wielded early in the Catholic school. The Catholic Church will be the Church of this country if we see to it that the faith of our children is safeguarded in their early school days. But to accomplish this, to make sure that their early footsteps in learning are not erring footsteps, we must see to it that our children have free access to our great Catholic authors, whose works stand for truth and are verily an inspiration and a guide.

We know, indeed, that the stream of English literature for three hundred years has been darkened somewhat—that the blind philosophy of man divorced from God and His divine truth has trickled through the pages of even what the world is pleased to term literary masterpieces. Men in their pride have forgotten the great truth so beautifully expressed by Dr. Maurice Francis Egan in one of his sonnets, that “Art is true art when art to God is true.”

And so we Catholics are face to face with the problem: What shall we do to counteract—to neutralize all this? There is but one course for us—one way, and that is create and maintain our own Catholic literature.

We sometimes forget the literary wealth we have in our household and, forgetting this, we do little or nothing in our Catholic schools and colleges to place in the hands of our boys and girls the precious masterpieces of Catholic literary art that are epochal in the significance of their truth and creation—mountain tops in the great continent of world thought.

We wait till non-Catholic scholars and critics proclaim Catholic Dante the greatest epic poet of all times before we erect a literary shrine to the sad Florentine singer in our homes; we are flattered when a Dr. Dawson declares Newman's "Dream of Gerontius" the most subtle spiritual poem since the "Divine Comedy" was given to the world, yet we hesi-

tate to make these appraisements ourselves—to give out these judgments to the world.

Surely, then, it is time that we Catholics should awake; surely it is time that we should fully realize the duty that is ours. But, mark you, I am not pleading here for the galvanizing of Catholic literary mediocrity into greatness or popularity either in our schools or out of them. I realize that we Catholics must enter the great temple of literature by a front door. No side door for us. It is because of this that I would early introduce in our Catholic schools the names of our leading Catholic authors. In fine, not only would I have our boys and girls study these authors, but, taking a leaf out of the public school program, I would institute in our Catholic parochial schools and high schools a Bishop Spalding Day, a Father Tabb Day, a Christian Reid Day, a Boyle O'Reilly Day, a Canon Sheehan Day, a Cardinal Newman Day, a Maurice Fran-

cis Egan Day, an Agnes Repplier Day, a Brother Azarias Day, a Dr. Gilmary Shea Day, to be devoted entirely to the works of these authors. Truth is, we have a creditable Catholic literature, but know it not. We have no need whatever in our studies and reading to follow false lights while the torch of God's truth is borne aloft by so many gifted writers of the household of our faith, shedding its constant and certain rays across our path, directing our footsteps and lighting our way.

Furthermore, I am sure you realize with me that in the Catholic school we must seek to cultivate a taste for clean and wholesome literature that will make for soul growth and the upbuilding of character if we would indeed have our boys and girls develop and become under the shadow of God's hand worthy members of Holy Church and worthy citizens of this great country.

It is true, we must not forget that our schools are voluntary—that they live and flourish through the generosity of our peo-

ple. Nothing, to my mind, in the history of the Catholic Church of America testifies so strongly to the practical faith of our people as the fact that they have generously given of their means to build and support these Catholic schools, and what is still better, have given without a murmur.

Now a people who have done this can, if roused to a realization of the need of it, build up and sustain a Catholic literature. Just fancy what we could do in this direction if every Catholic school in our country were to make it its very mission to promote and advance the study of our Catholic authors. I do not know how many Catholic boys and girls are in attendance at our parochial and Catholic high schools in this country, but I am confident that the number is so great that were their minds directed to a purpose, they could render popular any worthy Catholic author whose work they might take up for reading and study.

Let me ask just here, by the way, how many of our Catholic schools possess a library of Catholic authors? How many possess five hundred books? How many possess even one hundred? I sometimes think it would bewell if some of us would at times make an examination of our educational conscience. We would learn as Catholic educators that we are not doing our whole duty unless we are cultivating in the minds of those entrusted to us a taste for what is strongest and best in Catholic literature—a desire, so to speak, to vitalize our faith with the tonic thought of robust Catholicity so that our Catholic manhood and our Catholic womanhood may be prepared for any crisis that may confront us amid the constant upheavals of life.

I think, therefore, I am not asking or presuming too much when I invite all our Catholic teachers, both lay and religious, to co-operate in this project of disseminating Catholic literature through the

medium of our Catholic schools. The history of the foundation and development of the Catholic school in America is one of the noblest pages in the volume of our Catholic activities; for it is a record of sacrifice, of faith, of generous offering. Let us make this history still more beautiful; let us star its pages with new sacrifice, new faith, by our united endeavor to set on foot a plan, a project which will place in our Catholic schools the best there is in Catholic literature, that it may prove a literary sacrament of grace to our children, and our children's children, as they grow and wax strong in a knowledge of the things of God.

Let provision then be made in every school for a goodly collection of Catholic books—in history, in fiction, in poetry, in criticism, in art; and let our interest in this be at all times greater than our interest in commencement displays. Nor need we limit our books to Catholic authors alone. Many non-Catholic authors, in-

spired by Catholic truth, have lavishly poured out for us the wealth of their minds in literary streams clear and sweet and strong. But my purpose in appearing before you here today is to plead for a worthy recognition of our Catholic writers in our Catholic schools, that our Catholic children may not grow up ignorant of the great Catholic truths that have inspired the Singer, the Builder and the Doer.

I see no reason, too, why in our Catholic schools we should not hold to the old idea of awarding prizes to those who excel in their studies. It would prove an excellent means of presenting to the brightest of our Catholic boys and girls copies of our best Catholic works, so that in stimulating Catholic education we would thereby also be stimulating Catholic literature.

You may reply to all this and say Catholic literary work of our day is mediocre. Well, my answer to this must be in the

words of the Frenchman who, when an Englishman once declared that Lamartine is not a great poet, replied with pride and patriotism: "He is great tous Français." So we Catholics can well say "Catholic literature is great to us Catholics, for it is an expression of Catholic life and Catholic truth, even though the world—which is often wrong in its appraisements—crown not its brows with laurel bays."

May I then enjoin upon you Catholic teachers here assembled to give some thought to my suggestions in this paper, that we Catholics, whether in the school-room or out of it, may contribute a share to the great work of creating and sustaining a Catholic literature—a Catholic literature that will verily reflect a pure and unsullied knighthood of deeds worthy of a new Round Table, whose Sir Galahad, making quest of a Holy Grail—a prize of faith shall lead us till:

"The clouds are broken in the sky,
And through the mountain-walls
A rolling organ-harmony,
Swells up and sinks and falls.
Then move the trees, the corpses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
'O just and faithful Knight of God,
Ride on! The prize is near.' "

CATHOLIC INTELLECTUAL ACTIVITIES

There is, perhaps, nothing that our Catholic people in America need more today than a great intellectual awakening. It is because of the dormant character of the Catholic mind in this country that we have not as yet in America anything that might be called a great, distinct and worthy Catholic literature. We have increased in members, given of our means generously to build temples to God, and we are not without fair representation in the councils and government of the nation; but it must be confessed that our place in the intellectual world—our share in its activities is far from being satisfactory.

Of course, we must not expect too much from our Catholic people, who as yet have little leisure or disposition for aught save what concerns their daily bread.

But we are justified in looking to them to keep pace with the intellectual progress of our time if we Catholics would take our place as creators of ideals and spiritual benefactors of mankind. We have truly our work assigned to us, and as stewards we must perform it for our Divine Master.

For the great question that will not down is: What are we doing for the light of faith through the means of our individual gifts? Are we satisfied with our personal ambition to serve Cæsar and wear his purple of reward, or do we give the higher things of mind and soul a fitting place in our world of thought? Surely we should have a share, as Catholics, in all that makes for intellectual advancement and in the pursuit of the highest aims that stir the heart and soul of the nation.

In the discussion of our Catholic intellectual activities in this paper we must perforce limit ourselves to certain phases

of the subject in order that the spirit and purpose of it may be the better understood. Catholic intellectual activity is a very broad and general term, and we must confine it here to certain spheres of action where we can best trace and assess its value and worth.

Perhaps the most promising expression of Catholic intellectual life today is to be found in the marked progress seen in the character of the work now being done in many of our Catholic colleges. Thanks to the organization a few years ago of an American Catholic Educational Association and to the high ideals and ripe and sound scholarship which the Catholic University of Washington stands for, our Catholic colleges have awakened to a realization of our intellectual needs, and a tonic current has thereby passed through our Catholic Body Educational in America; and within a few years we may hope to have built up a system of Catholic schools and colleges in this country,

a credit to our Catholic people and a credit to the nation.

But what we want today is, rather, stronger Catholic schools than a multiple of them. Better far five great colleges, with strong and able faculties, than twenty scholastic weaklings grinding out graduates poorly equipped for the battle of life and representing feebly the massive strength of Catholic thought and training.

We should remember, too, that in overconfidence we may underestimate the work of the secular institutions of learning. Nothing can be so fatal to our work as an overweening confidence in our own particular program of labor. It is wisdom at all times to learn from those who are not of our household—provided they have, indeed, something good to give us. Humility is the very groundwork of all knowledge, as it is the pillar and basis of strong faith.

Let convents, then, remember that they are graduating the future mothers who will make our Catholic homes and give moral impress to the children of these homes, and that moral strength of character and the highest Catholic intelligence are of much more worth in a girl than the best of manicuring or the latest acquirement in drawing-room deportment. Let these Catholic academies for the education of girls keep in mind also that they are scarcely doing their duty if they fail to impress upon their graduates the need of sharing their knowledge in after years with the world around them, and planting in every Catholic home the fruitful seeds of wise counsel which their good and pious teachers have generously sown in their minds during their academic years. Indeed, we often wonder what becomes in after years of the bevy of fledged graduates who garland the academy stages on recurrent commencement days. Surely the seed sown should bear

some fruit other than the flowers of maternal duty which bless and sanctify the home, however fragrant and full of beauty these may be; for the activities of a Catholic woman should reach out into the world around her. She should be a corrector of false ideals in the moral, social and literary world, and not the plaything of fashion.

Granted that the convent has given her the right conception of duty as well as the right attitude towards life, she is not doing her full duty as a Catholic woman if she does not, as an apostle of virtue and goodness, kindle in the hearts of others the flame of divine truth which has made her own soul strong and beautiful.

And the question arises here: Are Catholic young men and women reaching out intellectually into the world around them? Is it not true that in many quarters there is intellectual stagnation among Catholics? Why, there are cities in this land which contain from a quarter of a

million to a half a million Catholics where not one Catholic club can be found doing serious intellectual work. Is it any wonder, then, that Catholic literature is languishing? Yet these same young Catholic people—many of them college and academy graduates—are quite alert in the social world. When Columbus Landing Day is at hand they readily answer to the roll-call and willingly squander time and money to play the role of Isabella or Ferdinand or Columbus in the richest of royal costumes, though they are not certain as to how many voyages the Genoese mariner made to America, or the conditions and circumstances which made possible his discovery of America. It is easier to wear the costume and greet the eye photographed in the paper next morning, than it is to do some reading and thinking.

I am inclined to believe that a part of this vanity and frivolousness is cultivated in our schools. Even they sometimes are

not free from the dangerous microbes of fads. In an age when novelty makes greater appeal than normal, well-poised truth, it would be a miracle if some of our Catholic schools did not suffer from the malady of the age.

Rev. Dr. Ryan, of the Catholic University of America, eminent as a student of sociology, has been recently credited by the Catholic press with giving Catholics some sound advice. This wise thinker and scholar counsels Catholics to join clubs and societies in the world that are seeking to better the condition of humanity, thereby giving these clubs and societies the aid of their Catholic thought and wisdom; and he assures Catholics that they are certain to receive fair treatment and representation from the members of these clubs and societies.

This recalls the fact that a certain class of Catholics—often not very intellectual—are continually charging our public libraries with neglect of purchasing Cath-

olic books. This is almost entirely the fault of the Catholics themselves. Non-Catholics in libraries may not know much about Catholic books, but if attention be called to some good Catholic work it will forthwith be placed on the shelves of the library. But as a matter of fact, is it not true that in such public libraries as those of Buffalo, Cleveland, Detroit, etc., the representation of standard Catholic books of worth and value is really good? Is it not also true that very few Catholics make use of them? I have been assured by Catholics in the public libraries that our Catholic people, as a whole, are not a reading people. Let us not, then, endeavor to shift the blame to the shoulders of others.

Again, one cannot well blame public libraries because they do not purchase some of our Catholic books, since some of them are not literature. Catholic editors know full well that under the name of Catholic books they sometimes receive for

review literary gasping weaklings that should have suffered pre-natal death. We need better than these for the Catholic intellect if it would be virile and worthy of our faith. It is one thing to cultivate and nurture Catholic literature and quite another thing to galvanize mediocrity into greatness.

Yes, truly, as a body we need a great Catholic intellectual awakening. On the social side, we are veritable giants. No doubt about that. Many of us know the latest dance step who are not familiar with the latest phase of thought, economic or literary. We have clubs and societies that have not a single intellectual note in their make-up, which serve the vapid vanity of society climbers and not the building up of a Catholic aristocracy of intellect. The result of this vain and frivolous occupation is little disposition or taste for the higher things of the soul. Many who should be nourishing the mind with good reading and entertaining the

great princes of thought, are dissipating the hours, squandering the gold of God's time in foolish pastime, which adds nothing to their strength, either physically, mentally or spiritually.

But it will be said Catholics must have social life. Decidedly so. But the Catholic intellect should not be made to bow down to it as to a golden calf.

We American Catholics have a different world to envisage from that which obtains in Europe. The joy and optimism of life is found here in action—in strenuous intellectual toil—in the conquest of difficulties; while in the Old World it is a thing apart from labor—it is a surrender of the soul to the imperious exactions of the light-hearted leisure which reigns everywhere. Our forefathers could dance jigs all day on the hill-sides of Ireland, but if their exiled children pursue the same joyous pleasures in this land of strenuous action and hard

competition they will remain forever the hewers of wood and drawers of water.

About twenty years ago a Catholic young man, the late Warren E. Mosher, the real founder of the Catholic Summer Schools of America, undertook, through the medium of his *Catholic Reading Circle Review*, later known as *Mosher's Magazine* and *The Champlain Educator*, to establish and build up among our Catholic young people a series of Reading Circles that would develop among Catholics a taste for the best in Catholic literature and art, and so give our Catholic young people a place among the scholars and serious intellectuals of our country. Mr. Mosher's was a noble and praiseworthy apostleship, and if ever a Catholic layman has deserved a monument to be erected to his memory by his fellow-Catholic countrymen the noble, self-sacrificing Warren E. Mosher has merited such memorial tribute and honor.

For some years, under Mr. Mosher's guiding hand and inspiration, these Catholic Reading Circles flourished. Indeed, there was for a time a Catholic Reading Renaissance. There was in the movement, too, some hope for Catholic literature, for out of the enthusiasm created for the study of Catholic literature and art it was fondly hoped that gifted Catholic writers of our own country would receive such practical appreciation as would lead to the very best literary results.

It seems, however, today that the greater number of these Catholic Reading Clubs or Circles have ceased their work. In the larger centers, it is true, some of them still exist; but the hopeful outlook of ten or fifteen years ago, when these Catholic Reading Clubs were springing up in every large parish, has become dimmed and shorn of its splendid promise.

It would appear as if it were difficult to get the mind of our Catholic young people to realize the need of intellectual

growth outside of their school days. Many are simply indifferent, carried away by the whirl of social life. In a certain Canadian city which contains some fifty thousand Catholics, a very able and scholarly priest had advertised, not long since, a series of evening lectures on philosophy for Catholic young people. Five or six constituted the audience. Where were all the young Catholics? In billiard rooms, chattering drawing rooms or dance halls. That same evening a Browning Club conducted by the only Unitarian Church in the city had eighty or one hundred earnest young men and women discussing the meaning and philosophy of this enigmatic poet of England. Such indications show why we have as yet no Catholic literature in this country.

In discussing Catholic intellectual activities we should not forget that splendid movement which had birth some twenty years ago, known as the Catholic Summer School. It has done much and is doing

much for the broad and popular culture of our Catholic people. Beginning with a few conferences given by distinguished Catholic scholars and authors in New London, Conn., in the summer of 1892, it has established a permanent home upon the shores of beauteous Lake Champlain, where its syllabus of lectures upon philosophy, history, literature and art cover some ten weeks and are often so pregnant with thought and scholarship and the breath and spirit of Catholic truth, that the Cliff Haven Catholic Summer School course may be now well regarded as graduate studies in the curriculum of our best universities.

Let us say in conclusion that it is clearly evident that the intellectual standing of Catholics in this country is of their own making. Culture, especially Catholic culture, is, indeed, power, a great fulcrum with which to move the masses and secure for those who possess it the advantages and birthrights of a people. It is

not as Matthew Arnold would have it, an altar for worship, but it makes the face of Catholic truth more beautiful and links the soul more closely to the wisdom of God. The Catholics of this country are reaching out for this culture, and he is truly an apostle of Catholic life and faith who aids them to realize and attain it.

THE CATHOLIC ELEMENT IN ENGLISH POETRY

The subject of the Catholic element in English poetry is, indeed, a vast and extended one. It involves an investigation as to how far Catholic truth has pervaded the great body of English poetry from the days of Chaucer to our own. It will be found, too, that many English poets, while not professing the Catholic faith, have directly or indirectly been inspired by its teachings and guided by its sane and lofty tenets. Because a great and true poet, no matter at what altar he may kneel, works towards the ideal of Catholic truth. For all great Christian poetry is but the flowering of Catholic truth.

The schism of the sixteenth century darkened the stream of English literature, but it did not entirely cut off the vision of the poet from that eternal beauty whose abode is the bosom of God. Glints of

Catholic truth, then, will be found running through all English poetry.

Aristotle says that all great poetry has a philosophy. Yes, and poetry, being one of the greatest of the arts, stands also for an ideal. This ideal embodies the soul of the people, whether that people be Oriental, Greek, Roman, mediæval or modern. To understand a poem properly we must re-create it in the times and under the skies which yielded their nurturing dew. How can we expect to understand Aristophanes if we do not know Greek life, or Horace if we do not know Roman life, or yet Dante if we have not studied mediæval life? To know the times is to re-create the poem.

Every race or people, then, stand for an ideal. In the East it was fatalism, in Greece it was beauty, in Rome under the Cæsars it was the majesty of law. Today in German literature the dominant note is the philosophical, in English literature it is individualism, in French literature it is

the social, in Italian the artistic, and in Spanish the chivalric.

In ancient Pagan days all art ministered to the senses, but the primary purpose of Christian art is to minister to the soul. With the advent of Christ a new meaning was breathed into art. It took "ten silent centuries" to give the world a Dante, the first great poetic flower nurtured in the gardens of Catholic truth. It took as many centuries to give us the "Summa" of St. Thomas Aquinas. All art is a century plant, with its roots deep in the past. What are the "Canterbury Tales" but a reflection of mediæval England? They are Catholic, because mediæval England was Catholic. Nothing could be so absurd as to doubt the Catholicity of Chaucer. The late distinguished Chaucerian scholar, Professor Lounsbury, of Yale University, settled forever this question. Chaucer criticises the monks, and Dante puts a Pope in hell. Notwithstanding this, both are orthodox Catho-

lics. Chaucer belonged to a rival order of the monks, the military order, and the Ghibbeline Dante makes his damned talk politics in hell. Surely, this sufficiently explains the reason for the attitude of these two poets. Both Dante and Chaucer died in the bosom of the Catholic Church.

To understand fully what part Catholic truth has played in English poetry we must realize that it has been from the altar of Catholic truth that the spiritual torch of poetry has gone forth and been handed down the centuries. From Chaucer across those twilight years when England was more concerned in the affairs of war than in the arts of peace to Spenser, and from Spenser to that myriad-minded dramatist, William Shakespeare, whose mind has been likened to an ocean whose waves touched all the shores of human thought, and upon whose bosom played all the sunshine and tempest of passion; and from Shakespeare to that chief of English epic writers, who trod the heav-

ens shod in the rainbow light of epic glory, John Milton, and from Milton across the dry Popeian period to that high priest of nature, William Wordsworth, whose altar lamp had burned unheeded during the reign of the correct school of poets, and from Wordsworth down to the poets who seemed to have passed away but yesterday—to Rosetti and Tennyson and Browning.

It is worthy of noting that the value of art depends upon the spiritual endowment of its age or epoch. It is the Olympian and pantheistic Goethe who tells us that "The epochs in which faith prevails are the marked epochs of human history, full of heart-stirring memories and substantial gains for all after times. The epochs in which unbelief prevails, even when for the moment they have put on the semblance of glory and success, inevitably sink into insignificance in the eyes of posterity, which will not waste its

thoughts on things barren and untruthful."

If we take, for instance, the three periods in literature represented by Dante, Spenser and Shelley—that is, the Middle Ages, the English Renaissance and the Age of Revolution—it will be seen at a glance that the time of Dante, which is known as the Ages of Faith, is because of its great spiritual endowment the greatest art epoch of the three. Take, for instance, the representative poems of these three periods—"The Divine Comedy," "The Fairie Queene" and "Prometheus Unbound." As Miss Vida Scudder points out in her scholarly work, "The Life of the Spirit in the Modern English Poets," when you compare the representative works of these three poets, there is no doubting which is the greatest age and which is the greatest poem. "The Divine Comedy" was completed in 1321, the "Fairie Queene" in 1596 and "Prometheus Unbound" in 1819. The age of

Dante was an age of contemplation, the age of Spenser an age of adventure, and the age of Shelley an age of revolution. The problems in these three poems reflect the spirit of the times. With Dante the problem is the purification of the soul; with Spenser, the routing of the powers of wrong, and with Shelley, the liberation of the soul. Miss Scudder sums up her estimate of the two protagonists in "Prometheus Unbound" and "The Divine Comedy" in these words "Prometheus is an abstraction, Dante is a summary. Prometheus is a man as dreamed by a poet, Dante is a man as created by God. And the thought of God proves the greater." It will thus be seen that poetry is never greater than the spiritual endowment of the age in which it takes form. In truth, it derives its very accent from this spiritual endowment.

All art reflects the times in which it has birth, but it draws its nourishment from the past. Its roots strike deeply down.

Take, for instance, Shakespeare. While he belongs to the Elizabethan age of literature, his genius has been fed and enriched by the centuries of Catholic faith in England, when men's souls joyed in the things of God, when the shrine of the Blessed Virgin stood by the wayside and the mystery and morality plays of Chester and York touched and stirred men's souls.

Yet it is very doubtful if there is any satisfactory evidence that Shakespeare was in any way attached to the Catholic Church. It is pretty certain that his father and mother were Catholics. But this was an age in England of the disintegration of the ancient faith. No doubt Shakespeare had a warm place in his heart for the Church of his fathers. In no instance does he ridicule her tenets in his masterly dramas. However, from this fact we cannot conclude that Shakespeare was a Catholic. Great art demands Catholic truth, and Shakespeare would not be the great dramatist that he is had he

stooped to the ridiculing of the tenets of the Catholic Church in his dramatic creations. This fidelity to fact and truth of life, this sympathy with the spiritual tenets of the soul, marks the work of the supreme artist in every age.

We know full well that there are many scholars and writers who hold that Shakespeare was a Catholic. I must say that I cannot accept this judgment or conclusion. Shakespeare lived at a time when to my mind religion touched very lightly the souls of the English people. Many of the dramatists of the time were profligates, and profligacy and the practices of the Catholic faith do not go very well together. Men of genius, unfortunately, are often not very religious. They realize better far than ordinary mortals what a part the spiritual plays in the growth of the soul and in the profession and growth of character, but often in proportion as God has dowered them with vision beyond men, they are dragged down by the

tyranny of the flesh. But if Shakespeare was not a Catholic, he certainly in his plays, as Carlyle says, voices the Catholicity of the Middle Ages. Queen Elizabeth, by Act of Parliament, destroyed the ancient Church in England, but her decree could not touch the Catholic life of England in the past, for the Catholic Church is the most immortal of things, and her life and the fruit of her life in art live on forever. It was this Catholic life that inspired Shakespeare and in many instances gave him plot and story.

If we appeal to Shakespeare for internal evidence to prove that he was a Catholic, we but weaken and make ridiculous our position, for every dramatist must be true not only to the setting of his drama, but to the psychology of his characters. It is no proof, then, to cite the case of Hamlet's father coming from purgatory to tell his son of his "murder most foul" that Shakespeare believed in purgatory. The tragedy of Hamlet belongs to a time

in Denmark when all its people professed the Catholic faith, and, besides the need of bringing Hamlet's father from purgatory for dramatic purposes, Shakespeare was compelled by the very setting of his drama to touch its life in the unfolding with the chrism of the ancient faith.

Let us suppose that three centuries hence a discussion arose as to the religion of the poet Longfellow. We can imagine some one citing passages in his touching idyll of "Evangeline"—the one, for instance, describing the heroine's beautiful countenance, "when after confession homeward serenely she walked with God's benediction upon her," or that beautiful and sympathetic picture of Father Felician, the village priest, whom all the children greeted as he passed down the street, and who with uplifted hand reverently blessed them. Surely, too, these passages, so full of Catholic life and color, might be well cited to prove that Longfellow was a Catholic. They are certainly as convinc-

ing as the Ghost in "Hamlet." But the truth is that neither affords any evidence of the religion of Shakespeare or Longfellow.

When we pass from Shakespeare to John Milton, we pass to a poet not only entirely devoid of Catholic sympathy, but a poet whose rigid Puritanism deprived his epic art of those Catholic symbols and Catholic legends and Catholic traditions which give color and life and artistry to the highest dreams of the soul. Milton's great epic, "Paradise Lost," is but a torso. It lacks artistic unity. It is only great in passages or patches. Unlike to the "Divine Comedy," which has all the artistic unity of Catholic truth, this splendid English epic, though rioting in imagery and the supernatural, lacks this artistic unity, and, lacking this, falls below as a work of art the supreme achievement of the great Florentine poet.

Passing from Milton to Alexander Pope, the culmination of the Correct

School of Poetry, we are face to face with a truth well worth observing. It is this: A poet may live a Catholic and die a Catholic, and yet put nothing of his faith into his work. Pope is certainly a case in point. Pope professed and practiced the Catholic religion, and yet you will look in vain for any evidence of it in his poetry. He seemed to be under the spell of the false philosophy of Lord Bolingbroke, his chief poem being saturated with this.

Now William Wordsworth, the head of the School of Nature and Romance, is a case in point where a poet may not profess the Catholic faith and yet teach Catholic truths—nay, give evidence in his work that the beautiful truths, teachings and dogmas of the Catholic Church may inspire at times the soul of the poet, no matter at what altar he kneels.

I remember that when I visited the Wordsworth Land in the summer of 1903 I was fortunate enough to meet a vener-

able octogenarian who had been an intimate friend of the Wordsworth family. In our conversation touching Wordsworth I elicited from him the fact that, while the poet was an Anglican, there was not anything of the Ritualist in him. He was rather what might be termed a Broad Churchman today. In view of this, Wordsworth's beautiful sonnet on the Blessed Virgin, where he pays tribute and homage to the Mother of God as "Our tainted nature's solitary boast," is, indeed, remarkable. Despite the fact of Wordsworth's anti-Catholic prejudice, which is revealed in some of his ecclesiastical sonnets, this High Priest and Viceregent of Nature pays homage to the Mother of God in lines that might have been penned by a Cardinal Newman or a Father Faber.

When we turn to the poets of our own time—to the poets at whose graves we seemed to stand, as it were, but yesterday: Dante, Gabriel Rossetti, Robert Browning

and Alfred Tennyson—we see what a large part Catholic truth has played in their best work. It was Rosetti that restored to English poetry the mediæval temper of wonder, and this is peculiarly a characteristic of the Ages of Faith. In reading Rosetti's poetry you feel something of the mystery that lurks in the dim aisles of a Gothic Cathedral.

Browning was of Nonconformist origin, and in many a poem does grievous wrong to the Catholic Church, yet his most considerable poem, that massive epic, "The Ring and the Book," which is essentially Catholic in theme, if not wholly so in treatment, bears witness to the fact that the great monologuist was at his best when he was most sincere and faithful in his portrayal of Catholic character.

Tennyson went to a Catholic subject to build up what he regarded as his best and noblest poem, "The Idylls of the King." No need to say that this is essentially Catholic. It has its setting in Catholic

times, and you will do well not to read it through the glasses of twentieth-century doubt and skepticism. Even Tennyson's splendid elegy, "In Memoriam," though regarded by many as a poem of doubt, beats and pulses in many a passage to the divine music of Catholic truth. When the sorrow in it sinks or passes from the sensuous to the sanctified, we feel the truth of Dante's words, "*In sua volontà è nostra pace.*" Surely, indeed, the Catholic element in English poetry is very considerable.

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